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EATURE DETECTIVE STORY

A PIECE of LOTTING PAPER

Y DOROTHY WEBER

"The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery. Will be Our Next Feature Story.

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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TAKE NOTICE!

On account of the pressmen's strike in New York, we are compelled to issue this number in its present form. As soon as the difficulty is adjusted, the normal appearance of this weekly will be resumed.—The Publisher.

A PIECE OF BLOTTING PAPER

A MYSTERIOUS DETECTIVE STORY.

BY DOROTHY WEBER.

CHAPTER I.

Will Clement stood in the window of his room in a cheap boarding house and watched the Oberly mansion across the street. He saw Adeline Oberly drive up in her uncle's machine and his heart fluttered wildly. He wondered when he might see her again and swore angrily at himself for being a fool. Will had just lost his job and at the same time his chance of seeing Adeline. He had had a position in the company of which Miss Oberly was the star. It had not been exactly a leading part. He had had only one speech, "The carriage is at the door, sir," and he had forgotten the "sir," a simple mistake, but it gave the wrong cue—and Will had been fired. As far as the job itself went he was glad to quit, for he was ambitious and wanted something better, but having fallen in love with Adeline Oberly he was willing to do anything to be near her. He thought she had smiled at him as he passed her dressing room and when Adeline Oberly smiled!

One by one the lights in the Oberly mansion went out until the only one left was that in old Daniel Oberly's library. He was a once famous tragedian, but now was a retired millionaire. The stage had been his only love and now he was enjoying it again as he watched the success of his nephew, Jack Carson, and his niece, Adeline Oberly. Jack was a handsome, hail-fellow-well-met youth whom everybody liked. He had become a popular matinee idol. Adeline promised to make a really great actress. She had besides her youth and beauty, charm and real histronic ability. Her uncle adored her. There was another nephew in the house, too, Wade Oberly, an indifferent actor who played a role in Adeline's company little better than the one Will had failed at.

As he watched the house, hoping to catch a glimpse of his sweetheart, Will saw the old tragedian come to the window, and pull the shutters tight. The light still burned in the room when Will, tired out and despondent, threw himself, still dressed, on the bed. Being young and healthy he fell asleep at once. And while he slept he had a remarkable dream.

It seemed that he again stood at his window, watching the Oberly mansion. But this time he saw the room itself as though there were no wall. Dan Oberly sat writing

a letter at the long mahogany table. A cheerful coal fire burned in the grate. The old man wrote slowly, stopping often to sit saring straight ahead. He finished the letter, however, addressed and sealed an envelope, blotting it carefully. Will even saw the blotter distinctly. It bore the advertisement of a well known life insurance company. A stag's head was printed in one corner. As he sat looking at the letter the actor slowly tore this blotter to bits and threw the pieces into the brass scuttle which stood, half full of coal, near the grate. He seemed worried. Several times he picked the letter up and re-read the address, which Will could not see. Then as if he had suddenly made up his mind he tore it in two and tossed the pieces into the fire. After that he walked quickly to the door and shot two heavy bolts into place. Then he tried the catches of the windows. Assured that he was safely locked in the room he crossed to a little safe in the corner, and fumbling a bit wih the combinarion, opened it and took out a small leather case. This he carried back to the light on the table, and touched the snap which fastened it. Even in his dream Will started, for blazing and sparkling in the lamp's glow lay at least a dozen diamonds. The old man smiled at them, shook his head and shutting the case with a snap picked up his overcoat from a chair. Still holding the case in his hand he slipped on the coat and started toward the door.

Suddenly a shot rang out. Daniel Oberly pitched forward with a scream—and lay very still.

Will started up in bed, the shot and the scream ringing in his ears. So real did it seem that he groped his way to the window. The single light still burned across the street. Will laughed and turned toward his own light. Then, wondering if it was still part of his dream, he heard a woman scream. He recognized the voice as Adeline Oberly. As he stood, horrified, lights blazed forth all over the house across the street. The scream rang out again. Will turned and rushed down stairs three steps at a time. It was not until he stood on the Oberly porch, his hand on the bell, that he stopped. What he meant to do he did not know. Adeline was in trouble and he wanted to help. But how? There were already two men and doubtless several servants in the house. He heard someone running upstairs. As he hesitated a policeman dashed up the steps.

"What's the trouble here, young man? Someone phoned for a cop."

Will shook his head. "I heard a shot and a scream."

The officer was ringing the bell furiously. Jack Carson, a dressing gown partly on, opened the door.

"Thank God, you're here," he cried.

"What's wrong?" asked Will.

"A shot woke us up—my cousin says she heard my uncle shout. We can't open his door. He doesn't answer our cries."

"Let's see it."

Will followed them upstairs. Wade Oberly was hammering at the door.

"You'll have to break it down," Will said, remembering the two heavy bolts.

Adeline Oberly was very lovely in something fluffy and pink although she was white and shaken.

"Break it, break it," she muttered desperately.

The men pushed, but the heavy door resisted.

"Somebody get an ax," said the policeman. "And you, young man, go and phone headquarters. There's something mighty queer happened here."

Wade turned to the maid who stood trembling behind him. "Go find an ax, Susan," he told her, but the girl did not move. She was a pretty girl, with bright but shifty eyes.

"You're sure your uncle's in that room?"

They all nodded.

"Who saw him last?"

"I stopped to say goodnight when I came in from the theater," Adeline answered. Will, coming upstairs from the telephone, thought it the sweetest voice he had ever heard. The policeman, however, did not seem so impressed.

"Any of you quarrel with the old gent?"

Wade looked at Adeline meaningly. Jack saw the glance.

"Now look here, Wade, that's not fair. Perhaps there's murder here. What if Uncle Dan and I did quarrel this evening? You know I think a lot of the old man."

Jack spoke so feelingly that the policeman glared at Jack. Will wondered if he knew something about the murder. Wade himself spoke quickly.

"I didn't say you weren't fond of him. None of us killed him if he's dead. I know you were in bed when the shot was fired. I woke you up myself. Why you didn't hear it—right under your room, I don't see. But Addie heard me run from my room to call you."

To everyone's surprise Adeline burst into tears.

"Didn't you hear me run from my room, Addie?" Wade repeated.

The girl nodded, trying to control her sobs. "I—heard you," she said. "It's nothing, nothing—oh, why doesn't someone open that door? Susan—are you going for that ax?"

As the girl turned to leave three or four men from headquarters dashed upstairs. With them was a tall, thin man who took charge of the situation.

The policeman explained briefly.

The tall man's bright brown eyes looked keenly at every one of the group of people, standing anxiously before the great solid door.

"Is there no other entrance to the room?" he asked.

"No," answered Wade.

"Then break this one."

Slowly, as the men pushed against it the heavy door gave way, the bolts torn from their fastenings.

Jack Carson and Wade Oberly rushed in. Susan Springer screamed. Adeline waited, leaning against the door frame, her face very white, her hand at her throat. Will looked in, trembling, for he apprehended what he might see.

A tall, white haired man lay stretched at full length on the soft Persian rug.

CHAPTER II.

Will heard the crisp voice of the tall thin man, "Shot in the back, and from some little distance." He had suspected that was what he would say.

As they rushed into the room someone stumbled over the scuttle, upsetting the coal over the floor. The fire had burned low and Wade Oberly, noticing this, spoke to Susan.

"Go and get a fresh hod of coal," he said, and the girl went out.

The policeman turned to Wade and pointing to the tall man said, "This here's Detective Knott, you've heard of him. He's from New York. He'll take the case if you say so. If anyone can find who did for the old man, Knott can."

Wade nodded. "Will you do it?" he asked. But Knott, the unraveller of mysteries was already at work. He was examining the room carefully. They watched as though they expected him to turn and name the murderer.

Finally he rose and shook his head. "I'll have to have the room to myself. Will you all leave? Stay in the house, of course. I may want anyone of you anytime. By the way, why should he have had his overcoat on—at three in the morning?"

Then Will remembered his dream—the dream he had forgotten in the excitement. In the dream Daniel Oberly had started to go out with a case of diamonds. Where were those diamonds he wondered. Queer that no one had seen them. As he left the room he turned to the detective:

"I've something to tell you," he whispered.

"If it's about this, tell me—and be quick."

"I hardly know—it seems foolish—but I was right so far."

"Come, come, no mysteries. If you've anything to say, say it."

"I wanted to ask about the diamonds."

"Diamonds?"

"Oberly's. I saw—no I dreamed I saw them—in a black case. He had them in his hand, in my dream, when he was shot."

"Hadn't you better begin at the beginning?" the man's brown eyes were very quick and sharp. Will told him the story of his dream. When he had finished Knott nodded toward the table.

"Someone's been writing there recently. That ink spot's not dry yet. That much is sure. Just what did you dream he did after he had addressed that letter?"

"Blotted it."

"Let's have a look at that blotter."

"He tore it up."

"What'd he do with the pieces?"

"Threw them in the coal hod."

"Let's see them—hello, where's the hod?"

"Oberly sent a maid with it for some coal."

"Damn funny thing, that. The old man threw the letter in the fire, let's have a look there."

He raked the ashes from under the grate and picked up two small pieces of charred paper. "Money—Addie—stones," he read. "Uh-huh, young man, you go find that maid, and send her up to me with that coal hod. See that she brings it."

Will hurried to the back of the house, and found the basement stairs. As he started down he heard voices, but just as he went to call Susan, a man spoke and what he said made Will stand very quiet listening.

"Give me those stones," he said. Will knew he had heard the voice before but he could not place it.

"I haven't them." It was Susan who answered.

"Don't lie. They were in that coal hod. Give them to me."

"I haven't got them, I tell you."

"Susan, dear, how can you keep them from me? You know how much I have risked for your sake."

"You heard what I said."

"Look here, Susan. They'll do you no good. You can't possibly get rid of them safely. I'll see that you get your share."

"Yes you will. You'll marry Miss Addie. That's what you'll do."

"So that's it! Good Lord—I can't talk about that now. I have no time to tell you I love you—and don't give a damn for Addie. Give me the stones."

"I ain't got them," persisted the girl.

"Look here, my dear—"

"Will you let me take this coal upstairs?"

"Not till you give me those diamonds."

"You'll hang for the old man's murder before you get them. Suppose I tell that you were in the hall when the shot went off, what about that?"

"You'll not tell that."

"I may."

"Lord, you're a fool, Susan."

The girl laughed. "Better let me go upstairs. That detective is smart. He'll miss me."

"You shan't leave this house."

"I don't want to."

Will heard them coming toward the stairs. He was sure he was to see the murderer of Daniel Oberly. He had no time to hide. He tried to crouch into a corner. Then he heard Susan's shrill scream and the next minute he was struggling with what seemed to be a very large man.

Meanwhile Knott, the detective, looked over the large room. He again examined the windows and found them fast. There seemed no way in which anyone could have shot Dan Oberly and escaped. Yet the fact remained that someone had done just that. A man cannot easily shoot himself in the middle of the back! Knott went upstairs and examined the room directly above the library. It belonged to Jack Carson, who, once more his old jovial self, let the detective in. The bed was unmade.

"Just as I left it when Wade called me," Jack afterward explained. Knott found nothing of interest in the room except its size. He noticed that it was even larger than the one below. The left wall partition of the library, must have extended under Jack's bed. He saw no connection with the murder in that, however, and he and the young man returned to the library together. They found the coroner, an officious man who was trying to frighten the family, in charge of the room. He was cross examining them all. They told stories that agreed because there was so little to tell. Only Adeline became confused. She contradicted herself twice. She said that she had been asleep and that the shot awakened her and she said that she had been awake when she heard it. Then she added that she had first heard Wade running down stairs and next she asserted she had first heard him run from his room. Knott noticed that Wade, who came in after the others, had changed his coat. Susan Springer and Will Clement did not appear and as soon as he could he went in search of them.

He found the basement deserted, the street door open. There were footsteps in the dust on the steps, but Knott could make nothing of them. Near the furnace he found the brass scuttle, full of coal. He threw this out and

from the dust in the bottom picked very carefully several torn scraps of blotting paper. One piece bore the head of the stag. Whatever had happened to the boy who had dreamed, he had told the truth about some things.

Upstairs Knott sat down at Daniel Oberly's table and began piecing the blotter together. Three or four scraps were missing, however. Only one seemed important. It was from near the center of the blotter.

As he bent over, trying to read the marks he found, the police captain entered.

"Look here," said Knott, "here's the name of the man to whom Oberly wrote just before he was shot. I rather fancy he was starting to see him." He sat up. "You read that word—read it backwards—you know how. What do you make of it?"

The officer studied the blotter carefully. "Looks like Jotham Jaggs, doesn't it?"

"That's what I make it. Ever hear of him?"

"No. I'll see if we can find him. Isn't his address there?"

Knott shook his head. "That's the piece that's lost. I've a feeling I'm going to need that before I'm through. You can read 'City' plain enough can't you?"

"Yes—Jotham Jaggs, City!" that's plain. Well, he shouldn't be hard to find."

Knott smiled grimly. "As I said," he repeated, "I fancy Mr. Jaggs is going to be hard to find. I'm going to need that piece of blotting paper." He looked up at the officer.

"There's $40,000 worth of diamonds gone. The maid took them out in the coal hod. Wade Oberly told her to do it. That young man will bear watching."

CHAPTER III.

While Knott was puzzling over the blotter and wondering about the whereabouts of Mr. Jotham Jaggs, things were happening to Will Clement. After a moment's furious struggle with his assailant he wrenched himself free and dashed up the stairs. He found himself in the street, and as he looked around to see just where he had better go he caught sight of Susan Springer, running down the road. Will was sure that she had the diamonds, and he was sure they were Adeline's diamonds. In a second he was after the girl. She ran well but in the shadow of the wall of the lunatic asylum which occupied the block three streets away from the Oberly mansion, he caught her. She bit furiously at his hand as it clutched her shoulder.

"Let go of me, Wade Oberly," she snarled.

"So," thought Will, "it was Wade Oberly with whom he had heard her quarelling. It was Wade then who had killed his uncle! He clutched the girl more firmly.

"Give me those diamonds," he said.

She started and for the first time looked up at him.

"Who on earth are you?" she gasped.

"Are you going to obey me?"

"I have no diamonds." But as she denied it Will saw her hand fly to the pocket of her apron. He reached down quickly—and freed from her fingers the little leather case he had last seen in his dream.

"Help, murder, help!" screamed the girl.

"Cut that out!" Will told her roughly. "You're coming back to the house with me, young lady."

"Help!" she shrieked again, and jerked herself free. Will reached out to catch her and suddenly felt h arms held tight in a powerful grip. He struggled b was thrown to the sidewalk, the case of diamonds in i outstretched hand. When he tried to rise he was push back again.

"Susan," he heard someone call, "Susie, it's Joe, co back."

"Oh, Lord, Joe, I thought you weren't coming. Quic he's got the stones."

"Who's the kid?"

"I don't know—I thought it was that fool Wade. H let me get the stones, right under his nose. I'll t you later. Take them from this fellow."

But though they searched carefully they found stones on Will. Susan was furious.

"What did you do with them?" she screamed. "Jo make him give them to you. He had them. He h them in his hand when I ran."

But if Will had the stones, Joe could not find the They searched in vain up and down the street. At la Joe turned to the girl. "You've bungled as usual why didn't you wait? The old man'd had 'em in a da or two. What did you want to go running down t street like a crazy thing for? Go home and keep yo silly mouth shut. I'll tend to this guy—and," he add for Will's benefit, "he's going to tell me what he d with the stones or he's goin' in the river."

"I ain't going back there, Joe," persisted the girl.

"Why not?"

"I'm going home to tell grandad. He's got som thing up his sleeve and he'll want to hear of the mu der."

"Old man Oberly."

"Susan—you didn't—?"

"No, I didn't."

"Beat it then. I've a plan for this guy. Pugsly he called. Susan ran down the street and Will w jerked to his feet. The man who had thrown him he him firmly. They stood before a little gate leading in the asylum grounds. Through this they dragged Cl ment. Just then a machine drove up and two men lift a third from the car. Joe went out to meet them. Wh he came back he had a very drunken young man by th collar.

"His papers are all O. K.," he said. "They ha to get him like this because he put up such a fight. He got a notion he wants to kill people in general—so, this to Will, "you'd better look out. We're goin' lock you up with him."

Even then Will did not understand their plan unt they took him before the sleepy-eyed young doctor in th asylum office. Then he realized that, under the nam of Monty Farrel he was being committed to a padded ce He tried to explain, of course, but Joe interrupted:

"He talks like that all the time, sir," he explaine "Guess it is because he's drunk."

Yawning, the doctor signed the papers. Five minut later a heavy door banged shut and Clement looke around the bare walls of a cell. On the cot in the f corner sat the young man he had seen taken from th machine—Monty Farrel. Will had heard of him as too gay lad who was the talk of the town because his riotous life. He wondered if he were really craz or if this were an effort on his family's part to save hi from himself.

It was very still in the cell until suddenly an u earthly shriek rang out, echoing through the long sto

corridors. Monty Farrel screamed, too. He sat on the cot and screamed steadily until Joe appeared at the door.

"There's goin' to be one of you in this cell in the morning," he said to Will, "and that one's not agoin' to be you. The river runs just back of here. You'll be in it if you don't tell me where those stones are."

Will grew cold with horror. That the man would throw him into the river without hesitation he did not doubt. Yet he could not tell him where he had thrust the diamonds as he fell. Still, if he were drowned could Adeline find them? He had a kind of melancholy pleasure in the thought that he might die for Adeline Oberly. He'd like to have Knott understand too. He was a fine fellow! As Will sat dreaming it seemed that old Daniel Oberly again stood before him, smiling a kindly smile.

"Don't lost your courage," he seemed to say in his rich toned voice. "Give the diamonds to Addie. You will lose them and find them again. When the ragpicker takes them, follow him. Find the last will, not the one in the andiron. Don't be afraid. Marry Addie."

Awakened, Will sprang to his feet. "Don't be afraid, marry Addie!" He laughed aloud at the folly of such a dream. Yet hope rose in his heart.

As he sat smiling to himself he became aware that the cell was deathly still. He looked up. His companion was gone. He could not see him anywhere. Then he became aware of a stealthy rustle, a quiet slip, slip, across the floor. It was nerve racking.

"Monty," he cried. "What are you doing?" No one answered but he thought he heard a low chuckle. Then he felt the cot on which he sat shake slightly. Monty was under it! Will stooped to look, but at that moment Joe opened the door.

"Look here," he called, "I'm ready to hear about them stones; are you——" He pitched suddenly forward and lay twitching horribly on the floor at Will's feet.

"Did I get him?" the eager whisper came from under the cot, and the next instant Monty Farrel, his eyes shining with glee, stood over the figure which now lay very still. A long knife caught the light as the idiot waved it aloft.

"I did it," he repeated. "I said I'd do it and I did. I stuck him beautifully, didn't I?"

Will stood as one petrified. Joe lay quite still at his feet. Monty spoke again. "Shall I stick you now?" he asked. Will shivered. Then a look of extreme cunning came to the idiot's face.

"No," he said. "I won't stick you. I'll run away from here with you. Let's go." He seized Will's hand and dragged him toward the door. Will went. He was dazed and could not think. As he stepped into the corridor he stopped and picked up Joe's keys which lay on the floor where they had dropped when he fell. Perhaps he could take the diamonds to Adeline after all! He pushed Monty Farrel ahead of him and hurried toward the yard. Pugsly might arrive at any moment. There was not a minute to lose. "Who shall I stick next?" Monty suddenly demanded, his eyes alight with eagerness. He held the knife toward Will and laughed. With a shudder Will reached out and took the blade. Monty screamed, but shrank back, frightened into momentary obedience by Will's look. They reached the gate and Will, his fingers trembling, finally found the right key. The next second they stood in the quiet street. Clement, with a sudden terror lest the case be gone, reached into the drain from the asylum yard to the gutter. Then he rose, smiling, the small morocco case in his hand. He had Adeline's diamonds!

Holding them firmly he turned and raced down the street, for he heard sounds in the asylum which warned him that, perhaps Joe had been found. Monty Farrel raced beside him, and, reaching out unexpectedly he wrenched the case from Will's hand. Then, laughing shrilly, he ran down a side street. Will dashed after him, and after a man chase of several blocks caught him. The case was gone! The boy chuckled.

"I fooled you," he said. "I fooled you. You stole my knife but I took your pretty case. I threw it away—go look—go look. You can't find it. I know you can't find it."

Will was heartsick. To have had it and to have lost it was hard indeed! He started back with a vague feeling that if he looked he might find it but as he turned the corner he heard Pugsly's voice shouting, "Murder, Police!" He turned and hurried up the street. Evidently some one saw him, for he heard a cry:

"There he goes," and took to his heels.

He ran until he could run no further and fell, panting, on a rickety old bench. For a while his senses whirled, but slowly reason came back and he looked around. He had reached an old deserted dock. The water, black and dirty in the pale gray morning light, lay at his left. Before him stretched the high fence of a coal yard. He remembered the knife in his pocket. If they found him with that he might have a hard time proving that he had not killed Joe. He threw it far out over the water and heard it fall with a little gurgling splash. As he sat quietly trying to think he watched an old ragpicker come up the wharf from the street. The man was evidently an Italian, a big, husky fellow.

Will rose. There was nothing to do but go back, find Knott and tell him what had happened. Perhaps the police could find the stones. Knott should hear of that conversation in the cellar. Will wondered if he had discovered that Wade Oberly was the murderer! He wondered too what the detective thought of him. Perhaps he suspected him. It must seem strange—a man with the wild story of a dream who disappeared! His thoughts were all jumbled together as he started across the square toward the street. Then, suddenly, his heart almost actually stopped beating! From the pocket of his ragged coat the ragpicker had taken a small black leather case. How well Will knew that case! He did not wait to catch the glitter than flashed forth as the Italian pressed the spring. With a bound he fell on the man and, wrenching the case from his grasp, fled. He ran blindly. Then, suddenly the world turned black, he fell heavily. In his eagerness to escape he had run head first into the coal yard fence. He heard the Italian coming, swearing horribly.

The diamonds! He must save them. In a last effort to do so he thrust them into a hole in the coal yard fence, just as the ragpicker fell on him, beating him with his heavy stick. Will fought with all his strength, but it was useless. Under the furious blows he lost consciousness

CHAPTER FOUR.

"Hot dogs! All hot!" shouted an old man standing behind the stand outside of the stage door of the A Street Theater. Just inside a worried manager paced back and forth. It was eight o'clock and the house was packed, for in addition to the audience which usually came to the play, there was a large crowd which had come to satisfy its curiosity. For the story of the Oberly tragedy, featured by all the papers had been the talk of the city all day. Of course people rushed to the theatre to see the star and her cousin—especially when the evening papers had hinted that Wade Oberly was suspected by the police of knowing more about the murder than he "let on." One sheet had even suggested that the fair Miss Oberly herself was not totally ignorant. Jack Carson alone had escaped any slandering, for Jack was beloved by everyone for his cheery kindliness and his ever ready good nature. Of course they said Jack knew nothing of it! The manager, waiting anxiously knew that the police were watching Wade very closely and as the time for the curtain to rise drew nearer and nearer he felt sure that he had been arrested. It wasn't the absence of Wade whose part was an unimportant one that worried him. But if the star did not appear there could be no show. And Adeline Oberly was not there. Earlier in the day she had refused to play at all that night but she had finally promised to come. The manager had been sure of her for she had always kept her word.

He heard the call outside and thought it sounded like a white man. The owner of the stand was black. He forgot that, however, for just then Adeline Oberly came in, very pale. She hurried past him to her dressing room, saying that they could ring up the curtain in ten minutes; she would be ready. Wade Oberly came in the next minute. The manager smiled.

"Thank goodness they're both here," he thought and went out to take a look at the house.

The door keeper, seeing him leave, and knowing that the entire company was in, took the opportunity to slip across the street for a drink. When he came back the man who called out "Hot Dogs!" was back once more. He heard the bell ring for the first curtain as he hurried in and forgot to wonder.

Inside, behind the wings, a tall thin man pulled off a dirty white beard and tossed it aside. Then he took off his coat and rolled up his shirt sleeves. He was not so husky as the stage hands who lounged around waiting for the end of the act, but he was enough like them to escape calling attention to himself. He took his place in the wings from which he could watch the stage.

Adeline Oberly was "on." Her cousin Wade came up to her, spoke his lines clearly and added in a whisper which, of course the audience could not hear:

"I've got to see you, Addie, got to talk to you."

The star paid no attention. She was watching a girl across the stage, not even looking at Wade. Knott, now to all appearances an idle stage hand, smiled grimly. "She's afraid of him," he thought.

At the end of the act he saw Wade catch his cousin's sleeve as she hurried to pass. She turned and faced him, her eyes blazing. They stood, hidden from prying eyes behind a large set. Knott watched them from his hiding place.

Adeline spoke first, "You have no right to stop me," she said.

"Please listen," he begged.

"I've no time. I have a change to make."

"Damn the change. You've got to hear what I have to say."

"I have no wish to hear."

"Addie—dear."

"Call Susan Springer that?"

"Addie," the man leaned near her, although she drew back as far as she could. His hands fell on her shoulders and turned her around until she faced him.

"Addie, dear, marry me—tonight."

The girl's eyes were big with horror. She shook her head. "Never." Knott saw that she was trembling, barely able to stand.

"You know I adore you," he muttered. The watcher saw her face, deadly white, under her make up.

"She loved him once," he thought.

"I love you," the man repeated.

"And you play with Susan? Oh Wade, when I looked out and saw you on the stairs with that girl I nearly died—of shame because I had—cared. And then, as I lay on the bed, trying to think—came the shot. Oh, Wade! How could you, how could you! The dear old man!"

"Great God—you don't think I shot Uncle Dan?"

Adeline nodded.

The man turned white—then red.

"Good God!" he repeated slowly.

"And—I loved you, Wade."

"I swear I had nothing to do with *that.*"

Knott knew that he spoke the truth, but the girl did not believe him.

"Addie—I did *not* kill Uncle Dan. How can you think I could have done that? Oh Addie?"

"I wish I could believe you. I want to believe you."

A bell rang. Adeline started.

"I must go."

"Say you'll marry me."

"I'll never marry you."

"You've got to marry me, Addie."

Something in his voice startled her. She looked up quickly, "Why have I *got* to marry you?"

He threw all caution to the winds.

"I'm not going to lose all that money—some of it's mine by rights, anyway."

Her face was suddenly hard and cold.

"So that's why I am to marry you at once," she said quietly. "So Uncle Dan left a will?"

"He left it all to you," muttered Wade.

"I'll give it to you. I don't want it."

"That sounds well, perhaps you mean it now—but there's only one way to be sure. You're going to marry me. And, Addie dear, I do love you—and you *said*, not so long ago—that you loved me."

She smiled, sadly.

"That was before I knew you, Wade. That was when I thought you honest and honorable—not a—murd—"

"Don't say it. It's not so—Addie—I say you are going to marry me—tonight."

"I'll die first."

"There's no question of your dying. I want the money, but I want you, too."

"Wade—" Knott heard her begin. Then a scream startled everyone behind the scenes. There was a sudden thud, a rush of flying feet!

Adeline had disappeared! Wade Oberly was running toward his dressing room. The rope with which he had controlled a trap door lay coiled on the floor where he had dropped it. Knott called loudly to two startled stage hands. The manager appeared. The detective jerked back his coat, displaying his badge. He told what he had seen.

"We must hurry," he ended. "Here I stood, so eager to hear all that scoundrel had to say that I let him hurt—perhaps kill the girl."

The four men rushed to the basement. As they opened the door Knott shuddered. He did not want to look. To see Adeline's fair body, bruised and broken—when he might have helped had he not been so eager! When they entered, the room was dark. The manager switched on a light and looked around.

It was not horror, but surprise and anger that caused an oath to escape him. Knott looked about.

The room was empty! A door leading to the street was open. A pile of old clothes in the middle of the room seemed to have been placed there to break the girl's fall.

Adeline Oberly herself had disappeared!

They dashed back to look for Wade, but as Knott suspected no one had seen him. At the stage door the colored man who now sold hot dogs said he had seen two men carry something out into a waiting taxi. Wade Oberly he had seen dash out on foot, hatless and coatless, apparently very much excited about something. Knott set the police looking for Wade, and told them to trace the taxi. He himself went back to the house. Who, he wondered as he walked through the quiet night, had stolen the star? What had Wade Oberly meant to do? Where had he gone? The police insisted that it was a "put-up" job. They said Wade had hired two men to abduct Adeline. Somehow Knott did not agree with them. But—after all his problem was to find the murderer of Daniel Oberly. Adeline Oberly must wait.

Once again in Daniel Oberly's library, he began to re-examine it. He marked out the place on the floor where the old tragedian had fallen. He again looked over every inch of the carpet. The coroner had said that the ball had entered the man's back and had slanted downward, as if it came from above. Suddenly Knott jumped to his feet and began examining the left hand wall of the room. The paper was a queer design, apple-like figures of a dusky gray on a lighter ground. Climbing upon a chair, Knott looked carefully, running his fingers lightly over the smooth surface.

His hand stopped! In the center of one of the darker circles he had touched a hole! A small, round, jagged hole. Peering closer he saw that the paper around the edge was scorched. It was quite plain that in this hole had rested the gun which had fired the fatal shot. From this hole Daniel Oberly had been killed. There was no doubt of that.

Just then some one pounded noisily on the door. Knott barely had time to jump to the floor when Wade Oberly lurched in. He wore no coat and was very much excited.

"Where's Jack?" he cried. "Where's Jack?"

"Where's your cousin Adeline?" Knott retorted, seizing him by the collar and throwing him into a chair. The man had been drinking and was ugly.

"Ask Jack—damn him. He stole her."

"Stole her! Oberly, sober up enough to listen. You stole her yourself. I saw you pull that trap."

Wade was too drunk to be surprised.

"But she—she was gone when I got to the cellar," he stammered.

Knott whistled. He had been right then, for, somehow, he believed Wade spoke the truth.

"Jack stole her from me, I tell you. I can't find her. I don't know where she is!" Wade went on fiercely.

"I'll take your word for that. But you're wanted on another charge. I'm going to arrest you for the murder of your uncle, Daniel Oberly."

Wade, sobered by the shock, sat quite still. His face paled and he trembled.

"Before God," he said slowly, "I am innocent of that crime. I know nothing about it, Mr. Knott, I swear it."

"You needn't bother," said Knott, "I'm quite sure you didn't. But you'll have to satisfy the police of your innocence."

"Then—you are my friend?" he asked eagerly.

Knott turned on him furiously.

"I am *not*," he said. "I'm the friend of no such low-down scoundrel as you are. Marry a girl for her money—carry on an affair with a creature like Susan Springer when you've a woman like Adeline Oberly in love with you! The murder of Daniel Oberly is a dreadful thing, but if it has shown your cousin the kind of a man you are—the old man has not died in vain. He himself would be glad, I think, for her sake. Perhaps you don't know where she is now—but you meant to know. Don't try to pose as a saint, Wade. You are no murderer, but you *are* a damned scoundrel!"

"Why—hello, Knott—you still here?" It was Jack Carson's jovial voice. "I say—Wade," he turned angrily to his cousin when he saw him, "where's Addie?"

"You know—what have you done with her?" Wade roared back.

Jack clenched his fists.

"Tell me what you have done with Addie. Have you killed her—as you killed Uncle Dan?" he demanded.

Jack spoke furiously, but to Knott it seemed as though there was a ring of insincerity in the man's voice. He seemed to be acting a part, and, clever actor though he was, he did not sound real. Perhaps, thought the detective, that was because he was not used to heavy roles. Certainly he had played other parts more skillfully. Knott was sure that Jack, and not Wade, knew the whereabouts of the girl.

"I'll strangle you—if you don't tell me," Jack exclaimed, reaching for Wade. "You murderer!"

"Jack," Wade was indeed sober now. "Jack, you *know* that I did not murder Uncle Dan!"

"You were in the room when the shot was fired! Deny that if you can!"

"I shan't deny it. I'll admit I was flirting with Susan Springer on the stairs at the time."

Again Jack seemed to lose control of himself.

"You tell me where Addie is," he shouted, and Knott smiled. He felt very sure by this time that Jack already knew.

Still, the police wanted Wade. No one suspected Jack—happy, easy going Jack.

"Go and call a policeman," the detective ordered. "We'll have to send Wade Oberly to the station."

"Are you going with him?" Jack asked, as, a few minutes later, the prisoner was led from the room.

"No. I want to examine the library again."

"What do you think you'll find?"

"A clue to the murderer of Daniel Oberly."

Jack smiled.

"I doubt if any of you can do that—unless you can prove that Wade killed him."

"You quarreled with him yourself, did you not?"

"Nothing to amount to anything. Uncle Dan was a bit quick tempered, you know. He and Wade were always on the outs." As he talked he drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and with it came a scrap of torn paper which fluttered slowly to the floor. Jack saw it and started, but Knott quickly put his foot over it. Jack waited, obviously for the detective to move, but when he found him apparently glued to the spot, he himself sauntered away.

As the library door swung to, Knott stooped and picked up the scrap. It was just as he had hoped—a bit of torn blotter. There were a few scratchy marks on it, but these Knott could not read. It seemed as though he never would find the address of Jotham Jaggs. He held the scrap to the light, but could make nothing of the scratches. He put it away carefully in his note book. He had a plant but it would have to wait.

He went quietly from the room, and, using a skeleton key, unlocked the door to Jack Carson's room. He looked around carefully. Yes, he had been right before, the room was larger than the library below. The left wall—the wall with the queer hole in it must pass just under the bed. Quickly he pushed the bed aside and threw back the heavy rug. The sound of the front door, softly shut, came to his ears, and he quickly straightened the rug, and drew the bed back into place. In five seconds more he was again in the library. He heard someone go past the door, and mount the stairs.

He sat down at the table, and taking the blotter, now mounted on heavy white paper, from a case, he fitted the scrap into place. It went in just below the name. The scratches were obviously the address of Jotham Jaggs. Once he discovered this mysterious Jaggs, he knew he would be nearer a solution of the whole affair. Thus far the police had failed utterly in their attempts to locate him. Yet Knott knew he was in the city, for Daniel Oberly had meant to visit him at three o'clock in the morning. As he puzzled over the blotter he puzzled, too, over what had become of Will Clement. In spite of his strange disappearance, he still had faith that that young man would be found.

Turning from the blotter he began to examine the papers in the table drawer, papers belonging to Daniel Oberly. Suddenly he sat up, a light of understanding on his face. He had stumbled upon far more than he had hoped, or expected, to find. He had learned the reason for the old actor's letter; he had found the explanation of the bits of charred paper he had found in the grate—"Money—Addie—stones." He had learned, too, the startling fact that Adeline Oberly——

Suddenly he got up and went to the door. He had heard a noise. There was a slight rustling sound—mice in the partition, no doubt. He turned the key and started back to the desk.

Then suddenly, deafeningly loud in the room itself, a shot rang out. One of the heavy andirons before the grate crashed to the floor, the round knob rolling across the carpet. A second later Knott, too, lay flat, his arms outstretched, very much as old Daniel Oberly had lain only a few hours before.

Knott knew now where the shot had come from and thought he knew who had fired it.

CHAPTER V.

When Will Clement regained consciousness he lay on a pile of filthy rags in a dark, ill smelling room. A lamp smoked rather than burned on a rickety table and in its flickering light he saw that there were two men and a woman in the room. A ragpicker bent over him.

"What you do witha de diamonds?" he demanded. Will shook his head. He'd suffered too much for those diamonds to give them up now.

The other man, a very, very old man with keen, ugly bright eyes, came up.

"Best tell where they are," he said, threateningly.

"He hidda them," the ragpicker growled.

"Oh, why didn't you kill him, Tony, and be done with it?"

"Then how I finda de diamonds?"

The man smiled.

"Hear that?" he said to Will. "Come on. Out with it. You'll have to tell sooner or later, you know. You'll save yourself a lot of trouble if you speak at once."

Again Will shook his head. The diamonds were Adeline's. The terrors of the past twenty-four hours had blown into bright flame the smoldering fires of Will's love for the beautiful girl. As he lay bound in a room whose location was a mystery to him he knew that he would escape, knew he would find the diamonds again and see Adeline smile her thanks.

Suddenly the girl in the room spoke.

"Oh! make him talk," she said, and Will started, for he knew she was Susan Springer! "Make him tell, Grandad, he knows, all right—make him tell—Grandad, he did Joe up!"

"Cut it," said the singular old man, he called Grandad. "The idiot did that. It was a wild scheme. But," he kicked Will in the ribs as though for emphasis. "You tell."

"Make him tell," the girl repeated spitefully.

The clang of a bell in the room below came to them.

"You go," the old man told Susan, and with a withering glare at Will she slowly went out.

The ragpicker again bent over Will.

"Dis your lasta chance to speak," he muttered, "I'll give him leave to kill you if you keep still much longer," the old man advised.

"And hang for it!" asked Will.

The man laughed, "Not I!"

Susan's voice came from the doorway.

"Grandad," she said, "there's a queer duck down stairs who says he wants to see you—he wants a job. I've an odd notion that I've seen him before. Better come down. The diamonds will keep, I guess."

Grumbling, the old man followed her from the room, while Will wondered. Susan Springer here! A granddaughter of the old man. Perhaps after all it was an excellent place for him to be! The ragpicker watched him silently for a while, and then he, too, left the room. Will heard him shoot a bolt into place on the outside of the door. The light had gone out, and Will lay alone in the dark, wondering. Just how well hidden the diamonds were he did not know. He had an idea that in

daylight they might be plainly seen by anyone who chanced to go to that side of the coalyard fence. And of course, these people would look as soon as it was light. If he could only get word to Knott! He might even escape himself if he could get his arms free. He remembered that in the poor light, before the lamp went out, he had noticed a great fireplace at one end of the room. He thought there had been some kind of a grate. Will dragged himself across the floor, and, feeling clumsily about, touched something rough and jagged. After a few minutes of painful effort cutting his bonds on it, he stood up. His wrists were bleeding he knew—but they were fastened! As he stood near the chimney he heard voices, a woman's and a man's. And the woman's voice was one that set Will's heart beating madly! What was Adeline Oberly doing in such a place? As he listened he realized that she was frightened. Her voice was as low and sweet as ever, but it was strained. Will looked up the chimney. It was very dark but he made out a few iron cross-bar braces upon which he started to climb. The rough ladder led to the second floor. Here he found a small hole. It had served for a chimney pipe. His foot touched a piece of iron that swung free, carrying a wall panel with it. Will smiled, for he saw that he could now enter the room. He looked through the upper hole. A lamp burned in the room, and lit up the face of Adeline Oberly. The girl wore the costume she had used in the first act of the play—a lovely creation of georgette and lace, queerly out of place in the dirty room. She still had on her make-up—but even in the poor light, Will could see that it was streaked with tears. She sat very straight on an old broken chair, evidently facing a man who spoke to her.

"Look here, Addie," Will heard this man say, "there's really nothing to get so excited and worked up about. All you've got to do is to marry me. Most girls would think that easy." Will knew he had heard the voice before.

Adeline's voice, quite steady and cool, answered. "You know I'll never marry you."

"That pup Wade meant to steal you—perhaps you fancy you are going to marry him."

"No—not Wade."

"Perhaps you think you'll take the money and do as you please. But you won't. You'll get no money if you don't marry me."

"I'd just as leave give you the money—but I will not marry you—whatever happens."

"What if I told you that Uncle Dan left the money all to me?"

"I've seen his will, and would know you were lying."

"And if I said there was another will that makes me the old man's heir?"

"If that's so, why do you want to marry me?"

"It never occurred to you that I loved you, did it?"

She shook her head.

"Frankly, it never did."

"It happens that I do—tremendously. Besides, that second will can't be found."

"How do you know it exists?"

"Uncle Dan told me."

"Does it really matter? You can have the money. Only let me go."

"I want you, too, Addie. Look here, I'm not here to talk about this. You're going to marry me. I'm mad about you, you know that. As far as that goes that first will of Uncle Dan's is no good."

"No good?"

"No, it leaves everything to Adeline Oberly."

"Well?"

"You are not Adeline Oberly."

"Not Adeline Oberly—what do you mean by that?"

"What I say—you are—just nobody."

"Jack!"

"Will was so startled at that name that he jumped back. That hard, cold voice—jovial Jack Carson! It was hard to believe.

"But, Jack!" he heard the sweet, startled voice of Adeline repeat. "What do you mean? Tell me."

"Just what I said. You're a nobody. Uncle Will, your father, went out and found you—bought you from Jotham Jaggs—because Aunt Kate's baby girl had died and the doctor said it would kill her to know it. So they pawned you off on her. She never knew. Lord knows where Jotham Jaggs got you! Stole you, like enough."

"You can't prove that!"

"Oh yes I can—Jaggs was no fool, and he took a receipt for you. He showed it to Uncle Dan several weeks ago. He was trying to make the old man fork over, to keep him quiet. He'd have done it, too, if Uncle Dan had lived. He was a queer guy, Uncle Dan was! He was so upset about your not being his niece that he made a new will, and left his money all to me—then he goes about trying to hush old Jaggs up. Started to pay a big sum to keep you from learning the truth. He didn't want your feelings hurt."

"God bless him for that!"

"The Lord knows how much he'd a paid Jaggs if he'd lived!"

Will saw Adeline start violently. Even in the poor light he saw the pallor of her cheeks under the spots of rouge.

"And so," her voice was cold and hard, cutting like a knife. "And so—you shot him—to save that money, that you might get it all. I—I am glad it *wasn't* Wade."

"I knew you loved him."

"I hate him—and I detest you. Take your hands from my arm, Jack Carson—you—murderer!"

"Don't be so free with that word, my dear. It's not exactly safe. You are to marry me. Jaggs will give me the paper—for a consideration. Uncle's fortune is yours then—and if you're my wife the secret'll be safe with me."

"I'll not marry you."

"Don't be a fool. I'm not asking you to do anything. I'm telling you what is to happen. I've a taxi at the corner, a license in my pocket and a minister who'll say the words even if you are quite unconscious!"

"What do you mean?"

Jack laughed.

"That you are going to marry me. I've wasted too much time talking already—come on, young lady!"

Will heard Adeline scream. He saw a man's hand press a handkerchief suddenly against her face. A sweet, sickening odor came to him. He kicked open the panel door and crept into the room. As he stooped he felt a piece of iron and his fingers closed on it automatically. When he stood up in the room, he had a heavy bar in his hand. Jack and Adeline were struggling before him. One blow and Jack lay sprawled on the floor. Adeline stood above him. Then she suddenly crumpled up against Will, leaning heavily upon him. He put his arm about her.

"Are you all right? Did you smell the stuff?"

"What—was—it?"

"Chloroform. Here, take a deep breath." He led her to the one small window and, tearing the rags from the broken pane, let the fresh air rush in. It was blowing a gale outside and the color surged back under the blotched paint on the girl's cheeks.

"There," he said, "you're better. Let's get out of here!"

Will watched her closely in the poor light.

"Did—you kill him?"

She looked toward Jack Carson, still motionless on the floor.

"I'm afraid not—no, he's just stunned. We'd better hurry. He may come to enough to yell and get Jaggs up here."

As they started toward the door the girl stopped.

"I've seen you before," she ventured.

"At the theater—and perhaps last night at the house." She smiled and Will felt himself tremble as he had trembled when he faced death that night. Her sweet eyes met him, confidently. "You will get me out of this, won't you?" they pled.

Will answered their silent appeal.

"Just you trust me, Adeline," he said.

If she realized how far, and how unconsciously, he had dared with that little word she was silent. Perhaps to her, as well as to the man, it seemed quite natural. She smiled again and put her hand in his.

"I trust you. Oh, it is *good* to trust someone! I have been so frightened."

"There's nothing to be afraid of."

"Take me away from this awful place."

"Let's go, then."

He opened the door and they started down the dark, rickety steps. Suddenly a streak of light shone up the stairway. Will tightened his arm about the girl who clung to him, trembling. Below them stood the man the detective wanted—Jotham Jaggs. There was also another figure, the tall, thin, shabbily clad figure of a beggar. Will now recalled that he had dropped his iron bar. He pushed Adeline back up the stairs, but she screamed wildly, and shrank against him. He looked up. Jack Carson, with the heavy iron bar in his hand, stood in the open doorway above, glaring down at them, with murder in his blood-shot eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

Slowly the noise of the shot died away in the room where the detective lay. A slight rustle behind the partition, perhaps it was the mouse again, was followed by a quick step across the floor above. Powder smoke drifted across the library. A door shut softly. Still the detective's figure on the floor by the grate lay still. Not until the thud of the heavy front door re-echoed softly through the house did it move. Then, as though the dead were coming to life, Knott stood up, smiling. He had solved the mystery of Daniel Oberly's death, and he had saved his own life by a sudden fall. He knew that had he moved, a second shot would surely have followed the first. As he stood congratulating himself, he saw the heavy andiron which had received the shot meant for him had been so broken that the knob of the top had broken off, and rolled across the floor. Stooping, he picked it up. Inside was a crumpled piece of paper, a will he found, signed by Daniel Oberly, giving "all he died possessed of" to his nephew, Jack Carson. The date was later than the one Knott had seen before the one giving everything to Adeline. Again Knott smiled. The mystery of the murder, cause, and method was indeed clear. There was still work to be done, however. Adeline was gone. He must find her. He had solved one problem; he must solve another. Susan Springer and the young man who had dreamed so queerly, must be found. Then there were the diamonds. They had been carried from the room by Susan, he was sure. He had disliked Susan, but he had liked Will Clement. He still had faith in him in spite of his strange disappearance.

He went back to the desk and picked up the paper he had read before the shot. They told him what Jack Carson told Adeline—that she was a foundling, and that Jotham Jaggs was blackmailing Daniel Oberly. He found a letter from this Jaggs, threatening to make the whole story public unless Daniel Oberly "came across." If Clement's dream were real, if it meant anything, the old actor had started out with a case of valuable diamonds to meet this blackmailer's demands. Just why the old man's will had been changed, Knott did not know. But it was clear that the actor had meant to save Adeline's good name. He had meant to silence Jotham Jaggs.

Knott looked again at the blotter. The address was there. He was certain of that, but he simply could not read it. Jotham Jaggs had to be found. He probably knew little if anything about the actual murder. But he would be able to throw light on other things. Knott felt sure that he would know of Adeline's disappearance. If the marks on that blotter were only larger he might read them! Suddenly he put it back in his notebook and picked up his hat. He must make one more trip to Jack Carson's room.

The place was just as he had seen it last. No! the rug under the bed did not lie just as it had! Smiling, he pulled the heavy bed aside. It moved very easily and lightly. One could not have heard it in the room below. Knott lifted the rug and knelt down. Again he smiled and, inserting a knife blade in a crack, pulled up a small flat trap door. Looking down he saw a narrow passage in the thick wall of the old house. He climbed down, stepping from one supporting beam to another as the murderer of Daniel Oberly had evidently done. It was very simple after all. He found the hole in the wall and looked through it into the library. The entire room was not visible, only the strip between the table and the door. It was the strip upon which both the old actor and Knott, himself, had stood when the shots had come.

There was nothing more to be done about that except tell the police to free Wade Oberly and to look for Jack Carson, bluff, hearty Jack, whom no one had for a minute suspected. Carson, sure that Knott lay dead in the library would no doubt return.

Knott left the house and, hailing a taxi, drove rapidly to a large optical store down town. Here he asked for the manager, and showing him the blotter, so carefully pieced together and pasted on a sheet of heavy paper, asked for help.

The optician smiled.

"That's easy—if there's anything there to read. We can magnify it for you in a second."

A few minutes later they sat looking at the strange scrawls enlarged many times by a powerful glass. Because he had read it before, "Jotham Jaggs——City,"

was quite plain to Knott, but the other writing he still uld not make out. The blotter had been a bit crumpled Jack Carson's pocket and the creases interfered. It oked as though it were going to prove a useless under-king.

"What does it look like to you?" he asked the op-ian.

"'Jotham Jags' and 'city' are plain. Is that a six on at middle line?"

It *did* look like a six! That was something.

"The last word there looks like 'Place.'" the op-ian said. His eyes, more trained than those of Knott such work as this, read more expertly.

"'Six Place.' Well, that's something to go on."

They studied it in silence. Suddenly Knott leaned rward.

"Rifts," he cried. "Six Rifts Place. Is that a possi-e address?"

"I think so—I'm sure there is a Rifts Place—down the docks somewhere. A dreadful neighborhood, I lieve."

"Have you a map of the city?"

The manager sent an office boy for the map and when came back with it, helped Knott locate Rifts Place.

"That *is* a bad neighborhood, better not go there one. Not so late in the evening, anyway—I'd wait now ill tomorrow—it will be dark before you can get there."

Knott smiled and thanked him. He meant to lose no ne in finding Mr. Jotham Jaggs.

However, he did not go directly toward the docks, hen he left the store. It was nearly six o'clock on the ird day after Daniel Oberly's murder. Adeline had en gone nearly twenty-four hours. He was quite confi-nt that he was now on the right track and that he ould find her by daylight. He drove to a dirty little cond hand shop where he bought a cheap suit of clothes, ch a worn, dirty suit that the owner of the shop, nirking broadly over his bargain, threw in a pair of spenders. Knott bought, too, a pair of dilapidated oes and an almost brimless hat. With this bundle he gain entered the taxi he had kept waiting and drove to costumer's. He dismissed the machine this time. And pparently he did not come out of the shop!

Half an hour after he went in, however, a tall, thin ggar, wearing a dirty suit and having long, gray whis-rs, badly stained with tobacco juice, lurched out of the or and ambled slowly off down the street.

This beggar finally reached the tumble-down house at Rifts Place. He looked it over carefully, drifted into e dirty saloon across the way, and asked for Jotham ggs.

"Across the street," the bartender told him. "He's nite a character, that guy," he added.

The beggar was slightly interested.

"Why?" he asked.

"He's a ragpicker — hires at least a dozen men to ork for him. If you're lookin' for a job I expect you n git it. He has lots of money—not sayin' jest how he ts it though. Got a prety granddaughter, Susie, ho's in service up-town with some swell family."

The beggar smiled under his dirty beard. This was ore than he had hoped for. He had known there was mething bad about that girl! Thanking the bar-nder for his advice, he shuffled out, murmuring that e'd go strike the old man for a job—even if it were e middle of the night.

Before 6 Rifts Place, he again paused. The house seemed ready to fall down. It was built about a great chimney which swayed back and forth in the gale that blew from the river. It did not seem safe. At any minute the beggar thought that the chimney might go over, and if it did, it would carry most of the house with it.

But he knocked at the door and pulled the frayed old bell knob with all his might. He waited a long time. Then—Susan Springer opened the door and stared out into the dark.

"What is it," she demanded.

"Kin I git a job pickin' rags?" he whined.

"Lovely time of night to come asking for a job—still the old man's short on account of the war. Perhaps he'll want you. No—you better get away." She started to close the door but the beggar's foot was in the way.

"I'm starvin', miss."

"I don't suppose Grandad will think that's any reason for givin' you a job." She shivered in the cold wind, "but—come in. I'll go ask." As he stepped into the light Susan looked at him sharply and then peered at him, frowning. "Sit down and wait," she ordered and ran out the room. He heard her go up stairs and call, "Grandad!" Then he heard the two talking on the stairs.

"What'd you let a beggar in for at this time of night. You know I've got my hands full with that kid."

"But, Grandad—he's sorter queer—this fellow."

"Too many fellows around here tonight. Look here, Susie, you're sweet on this Carson guy. If we get those stones we want you can have him. You will have money then. The old man's will is bound to turn up and he'll have the rest of the Oberly fortune. What did you waste time on Wade for?"

"What are you bothering about that now for?"

"I've a notion this Jack of yours is figuring on marrying Miss Addie—and I think it's your fault. You've bungled a lot of things."

Susan laughed. "Not many—Wade, the poor fool, was sweet on me— and, well, he did put the stones in my hands."

"For you to lose!"

"If that idiot hadn't done for Joe!"

"If—if—if—if Carson, the young fool, hadn't done for the old man I'd a-had those diamonds all safe by this time. Let's go see your old beggar."

"I think I've seen him before."

"Hanging around here, most likely. You're always getting queer notions, Sue."

The beggar was apparently asleep when they came in. Jaggs shook him roughly.

"What'd you want?"

The man blinked sleepily. "Kin I pick rags for you?"

"Pretty night to come looking for a job."

"Ain't you got a job for me?"

Susan, who had not taken her eyes from the beggar's face for a second, suddenly pulled her grandfather aside and whispered to him excitedly. The old man turned and gave him a quick, piercing glance.

"Come on," he said, "I've got a job for you all right. Come up stairs and look after a kid I've got trussed up, up here." He pushed the old man before him up the stairs.

As they opened the door the light streaming up

showed them Adeline Oberly, very pretty indeed in her fluffy frock, as she leaned against Will Clement. The beggar whistled. Then Adeline screamed and the group at the foot of the stairs saw Will turn to face Jack Carson, who, bloody and dirty, stood brandishing a heavy iron bar and glaring down at them.

Susan shrieked: "Don't, Jack!"

The bar stopped half way.

"Why not?" he roared.

"We'll never get the stones if we kill him," the girl cried.

Jaggs and the beggar dashed up stairs. There was a furious struggle, but in a second it was over, and Will, Jaggs and the beggar were alone in the room. They heard the bolt drop into place and knew the door was locked this time. Will looked at the dreadful appearing old man and went closer to the girl.

"Why," he asked, "are you here?"

"Because," the beggar suddenly stood straight, "because—that old devil or the pretty young one down stairs, suspects I am—I."

"Mr. Knott!" Will and Adeline spoke together.

Knott smiled. "I'm glad you're safe, Will, how did you get here? Do you know where the missing diamonds went?"

Will nodded. "I think they're safe till daylight. We know now who murdered the old actor!"

"That handsome young devil, Jack? Yes, I know. I found that out some time ago. Suspected him from the first. He played his cards too well. He brought you here, didn't he, Miss Adeline?"

She nodded, "And told me dreadful things—that I'm not, not Adeline Oberly. Oh, Mr. Knott—I wonder what my real name is?"

The detective shook his head. "I can't tell you that, my dear," he said, "but it doesn't take all my knowledge to make a good guess as to what it's going to be." He laughed as he glanced toward Will. "How can we get out of here?"

Will pointed to the chimney. "If Miss Oberly can get down that way," he said, "it's rather hard."

Adeline laughed. "I've had gymnasium practice all my life, you know. I can get down if you can."

Knott looked at her approvingly. The girl was certainly a good sport!

"Come on, then," he said. "Will, you lead the way."

On the stairs Jaggs spoke to Susan: "I think you guessed right that time," he said; "did you see that 'beggar' get up these stairs? Let's go watch them." Together they crept into a little, low room near the chimney. From a grating they could watch the room in which they had their three prisoners. As they entered Jack turned and closed the door. It clanged to, fastened with a spring lock.

"Good God," Jaggs screamed. "You locked us in, you fool!"

Susan, very pale, touched his arm, "Jack didn't know, Grandad, someone will let us out in the morning."

So they stood imprisoned and watched the three people in the next room. They saw Will disappear down the chimney, saw him reach up to help the girl, saw her disappear and watched Knott follow. Jaggs groaned.

"They'll get outside and have the police at us," he growled.

Meanwhile the three climbed slowly down the rickety old ladder. The chimney was very large. At one time it must have served for a forge of some kind. They passed the room in which Will had been imprisoned and a few minutes later stood outside, free.

A storm raged. Knott turned to Will. "I'll stay here with Miss Adeline and you go get a taxi and bring it here quick."

Will turned to obey. A blast stronger than ever shook the house, which quivered before it like a thing alive.

"Look!" gasped Adeline

Swaying slowly to and fro, tipping farther and farther, the great chimney moved. With one impulse the three ran. And just in time, for, with a crash even louder than the roar of the wind, the chimney fell. Bricks were hurled wildly through the air. A man's awful shriek, a girl's shrill cry! Then silence, except for the howl of the wind.

The three looked back. The little frame house had crumbled like an egg shell under the fall of the chimney. It lay in a pile of bricks, mortar and wood, from which clouds of white dust rose and were whirled away by the blast. People were running toward it from all directions. Knott spoke hurriedly to Will.

"We've got to get the girl out of this," he said, "take her home and stay with her. It looks as though she wanted you. I'll stay here. If he's not dead already, I want Jack Carson."

Will turned to the girl, "Wade Oberly's in jail," he said, "for the murder of his uncle. Do you want to tell him he has been proved innocent? Shall I take you to him?"

She shook her head, "I don't want to see Wade Oberly again," she said. "He wanted—my money. And I had cared for him."

"And now?"

She looked up at him and smiled. The beauty of Adeline Oberley's smile had won hearts all her life. And this smile was meant for Will Clement and for him alone. He thrilled before it.

"And now?" he repeated softly, looking straight into her eyes.

"Now," she answered gently, "we are beginning a new day. See the wind has gone down and the light is coming. It will be morning soon."

Will remembered his second dream. He heard Daniel Oberly's kind voice, "You will marry Addie and be happy."

He looked at the tired pale girl who, worn out, leaned heavily on his arm. "Our dreams are coming true," he said.

CONCLUSION.

Knott sat again in the library of the Oberly mansion. Jack, his leg broken, had been rescued from the ruins of the shack at 6 Rifts Place and was safe in jail. Susan and her grandfather had both been killed by falling bricks. Well, Knott couldn't exactly grieve over that. He almost wished Jack had met the same fate. It would have been easier so! The police were quite satisfied, but Knott himself was not so sure that everything had been solved.

"I don't believe Daniel Oberly meant to leave that will giving everything to Carson," he told Will Cle-

ment, who sat across the table, "I've a feeling that they quarreled—Jack admitted the quarrel, you know—the old man made still another will."

Then Will remembered that part of the dream he had had in the asylum. It had been forgotten because it meant so much less than the other which promised him Adeline.

"I dreamed that he told me he wrote another."

Knott looked up quickly, "Dream anything else?"

Will turned red. "Yes, sir—do you have to hear that too?"

Knott laughed. "I can guess—no, save that for Miss Addie, herself. That's going to be alright, too. You're a lucky dog."

"I'm going to have a chance at Carson's place at the Gaiety. It's not what I want. I mean to do something big—fine. But this is a good start."

"You'll succeed. That dream of yours didn't tell you where that second will is, did it?"

"No, sir."

They sat gazing into the fire which once more burned brightly on the hearth. The knob had been screwed back on to the andiron. Suddenly Knott stood up and went across to the grate.

"Yes," he said over his shoulder to Will, "I was stupid. This one comes off, too," and he turned it quickly.

"Yes—here it is!"

It was, indeed, another will, dated the very evening of the old actor's death.

"You would have saved trouble," said Knott, smiling, "if you had begun your dream a little sooner, if you had seen through that left wall and read that letter."

Will shook his head. "Poor Uncle Dan!" he said.

"Uncle Dan?"

Again Will blushed. "It slipped out."

"Good morning." They turned to see Adeline, very tall and slim in her simple black frock. Her pale cheeks flushed as she looked at Will.

"What are you doing?" she asked as she sank into the big chair before the fire.

"Making dreams come true," Knott told her.

She smiled up at Will. "That is what you said last night," she told him, and added, "I've been planning ever since. Will, I think if dear Uncle Dan knows that his death saved me from marrying Wade Oberly, he will be a little bit happy. He loved me—if he wasn't really my uncle. He loved Jack, too. Poor Uncle Dan. I think perhaps it's best he shouldn't know. But I like to think he didn't die in vain."

"He would be glad that you are going to be happy," Will answered.

Knott, his work done, slipped quietly from the room. The girl in the chair and the man leaning over did not even hear the door swing softly shut behind him as he went.

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THE OPAL RING

BY EDWARD BAKER CARLTON.

CHAPTER I.

The Inquest.

It was a great day for Corr's Corners.

For the first time in its history a coroner's inquest was being held.

A strange man had been found floating in the waters of the little bay upon which the town fronted, and there were rumors that he had not come to his death by natural causes.

The parlor of the little hotel at Corr's Corners, where the inquest was held, was filled with an eager crowd listening to the meager testimony in the case. The landlord was upon the stand relating what he knew, and that was not much.

"The stranger came to my house on Monday forenoon," he said, "remained a little while and then went away, but came back half an hour later with old Mr. Norris."

"What then?" asked the coroner.

"He and Mr. Norris went in and took the room on the second floor overlooking the bay. Mr. Norris had never been in my house before, and that was strange in itself."

"Never mind that."

"Well, he and the stranger sat in that room for some hours by the window. Folks saw them from the road."

"Go on."

"There's not much more to say. The head waiter went up at five o'clock to see if anything was wanted, and found the room vacant. At six o'clock the stranger was found floating in the bay."

"You did not see either him or old Mr. Norris leave the house?"

"No."

"You can identify the body as that of the stranger?"

"Yes."

That was all Mr. Dole had to say, and James Hunter, the head waiter at the hotel, was called.

He had shown Mr. Norris and the stranger to the room on the second floor of the hotel, overlooking the bay, and had served them with a bottle of wine, and had afterward, at Mr. Dole's suggestion, gone up to see if anything else were wanted, and had found the room vacant.

He had not seen the guests leave the house, but, as he had been in the dining-room most of the time attending to other guests, that was not so strange.

He had identified the body found as that of the stranger, was positive that it was the same man he had shown to the upper room at the hotel. One or two others employed in the hotel had seen the two men enter, but none had seen them go out, either in company or alone.

All identified the body, as the sight of a stranger in the hotel was of sufficient rarity to make them remember any strange face that appeared there.

"Call Mr. Norris," said the coroner, and a buzz of expectancy went around the room.

Mr. Norris was a man of sixty-odd years, tall, and of commanding presence, with white hair and beard, a keen eye, a fresh color, and possessing a wonderful amount of self-control.

He took the stand quietly, without the least show of emotion, and glancing carelessly around upon the mass of eager, curious faces, as if he scarcely saw them, faced the coroner.

"You came into this hotel day before yesterday, Mr. Norris, at about noon, I believe?"

"At eleven o'clock and twenty minutes, sir," was the precise answer.

"You were not in the habit of coming here?"

"I had never before entered the place since it was opened, twenty-one years and six months ago."

"Your business must have been urgent to take you here?"

"It was."

"Have you seen the body, Mr. Norris?"

"I have, and it is that of the man with whom I spent some time in this hotel," answered the witness, not waiting to be asked the second question.

"You were acquainted with the man, of couse?"

"I was not, and had never seen him before last Monday."

This answer produced a profound sensation.

"You did not know him?" repeated the coroner.

"No. He came to my house, introduced himself, asked for an interview on business, and I accompanied him here, not wishing to take a stranger into my house."

"Might I inquire the nature of the business?"

"Certainly. The man was an inventor with a valuable patent for an improvement in steam engines, and wanted me to invest capital in the scheme."

"How did he hear of you?"

"Through my son, whom he knew slightly, from having met him once or twice in business houses in New York."

"Did you come to any conclusion in the matter?"

"I agreed to let him have the money today, provided he gave good security."

"Did you leave the house in company with him?"

"I did, and went as far as the postoffice, which he entered, while I continued on to my house."

"When did you leave the hotel?"

"At three o'clock and ten minutes. I left him about five minutes later."

"Why are you so precise as to the time of entering and leaving the hotel?"

"Because I looked at my watch and I always remember such things."

"Did you see anyone when you left?"

"No, they all appeared to be in some other part of the hotel."

"Anyone on the piazza?"

"No, it was too warm. There were few people in the street also."

"One more question, Mr. Norris. You learned the stranger's name, of course?"

"Yes, it was Elliott Sanderson, of New York."

"Did he say where he was going when you left him?"

"He intended to take the train to the city at four o'clock, and promised to write to me in case he could not come today."

"Wasn't your interview a long one?"

"I wished to have a full understanding of the nature of his business before investing my money. The time did not seem long until I came to look at my watch."

Mr. Norris now left the stand, and a fisherman named Sandy Scudder was called.

The witness was an old man with a shock of white hair on his head, a short white beard running from ear to ear under his chin like a frill, while his cheeks and lips were closely shaven.

He was a sturdy, thickly-built fellow, and a man of few words, merely testifying to the fact of having found the body of a strange man floating in the bay at about six o'clock on Monday evening, and that he had brought it ashore and notified the coroner.

'The man was dead when you found him?"

"He wur—dead as a herrin'."

"You did not examine the body?"

"No; it wur bad enough to have it in the boat."

"Did the body show any signs of violence?"

"I didn't look at it."

Sandy Scudder stepped down, and the village doctor said that he had examined the body, and beyond a few bruises, which might have been caused by its falling on the rocks, showed no marks of violence.

The jury then deliberated for a few minutes, and presently the foreman rose and said:

"Mr. Crowner, we find that the stranger was drownded to death, and that no one ain't to blame."

Some of the auditors smiled, and the coroner asked:

"Then your verdict is accidentally drowned?"

"That's it, and so say we all."

The room was now cleared, and for a time the landlord, Mr. Dole, did a thriving business at the bar.

Finally the place became quiet, and then a ministerial-looking man who had been observed in the parlor, and was said to be a clergyman on his vacation, approached Mr. Dole, who was seated in a low rocking-chair with his feet on the sill of an open window, and his high hat tipped back on his head, and rubbing his hands together as if he were washing them, said:

"Sad case, sir? In the midst of life we are in death."

"Well, yes, 'tis rather sad, I suppose." said Dole, looking up, while the ministerial gentleman sat on a sort of locker running along the walls and brought the tips of his long, white fingers together. "I suppose it is sad to somebody."

"And strange, too."

"Ah, that's what it is now. It is strange, and I could tell some things that would make it look stranger."

"But you were questioned."

"Not on those points," said the landlord, putting his hands in his pockets and tilting further back in the little rocking-chair.

"Were you not bound to tell all you knew?"

"No, I wasn't, not if I wasn't asked," answered Dole decidedly. "Coroner Jones keeps the other hotel in the place, and wants to monopolize the hull business. If he wanted to know more he should have asked me leading questions."

"Ah I am afraid there is an unholy rivalry between you," said the other, raising his eyes and locking his fingers.

"Not on my part there isn't. Jones never did use me square. He ain't satisfied to divide the business with me but he wants all of it and runs down my house, and he don't get no voluntary information out o' me, I can tell him. If his questions call for it, all well and good, because I'm on oath, but I've got no call to tell him things that he don't ask for."

"Ah, I am afraid that is tantamount to telling a falsehood," sighed the minister again, changing the position of those restless fingers. "We should tell the truth at all times, my dear Mr. Dole."

"And I'm ready to tell it," blurted out Dole; "but not to that sneaking Bill Jones. If Squire Avery had held the inquest, now, more would have come out."

"Then your testimony would have altered the verdict?"

"I don't say it would, but it might. There's that ring business, for instance."

"The ring business?" mildly queried the other. "I remember no allusion to that. I thought the business was in regard to improvements in steam engines."

"You don't understand. That corpse there," pointing over his shoulder with his thumb to a rear room, where the body now lay awaiting burial or a claimant, "that there corpse had an opal ring in its right hand when it was found."

"On one of the fingers?"

"No, but held tight in the palm. Now that stranger never wore no opal nor any other rings on his fingers when he come in first?"

"You noticed this, then?"

"Yes, for he put both hands out flat on the desk as he asked me where old Norris lived. I noticed his hands and I noticed him, and I said to myself that I had got a good customer away from Jones, 'cause he looked like a good paying one. He bought some cigars, the best I had, and afterwards ordered champagne and didn't bother me about the change."

"Then this ring may be an important clew?"

"That's it, but I wasn't going to tell Jones about it. I'll do a little detective work on my own account and wake up this sleepy old town, you bet."

"I never wager," muttered the guest, deprecatingly.

"So you don't; excuse me. Now, whose ring is this, how did the stranger get it and why did he clutch it so hard? Why, it took me some time to get it out of his hand."

"Ah, there is a mystery here."

"You bet. That ring belongs to somebody that would pay considerable to have it back. That ring is a clew to a murder, and I'm going to follow it up and make folks open their eyes. I've got a big thing here, and I'm just the fellow to work up." Evidently Mr. Dole was a pretty big man in his own contention. "There's another thing," he continued, "and that's this. Sandy Scudder ain't the man to let slip a chance of maikng an honest penny if he can. Well, then, how is it that the

stranger's watch and chain wasn't found on him when the body was brought here?"

"How was it he hadn't no locket, when I saw one hanging to his chain when he stood before the desk? He didn't wear rings, but he did have a watch and chain and locket.

"Sandy didn't look over the body—oh, no! That's like the old pirate, isn't it. He didn't take the opal ring because he didn't have the knack of opening the fingers like I did. Sandy knows more'n he wants to tell."

"Perhaps he did not tell it because he was not asked?" mildly suggested the minister.

"But he was asked. How did he happen to be out there with his boat on an ebb tide? That ain't the time to catch fish. What was he hob-nobbing with young Norris for, in his cottage last night, and why did young Norris come and go in the dark instead of showing himself?"

"He was not present at the inquest?"

"No—and he's supposed to have known the corpse yonder. They say he's out West, traveling. How did I happen to see him sneaking into Sandy's house last night if he was?"

"You are certain you did?" was the quiet question.

"Certain? Of course. There's something hidden here, and I'm going to find it out. You're a minister, and of course I'd say things to you I wouldn't say to everybody. I suppose you'll speak at the funeral, if no one comes to take away the corpse?"

"Where is the resident clergyman?"

"Gone to the city to enjoy life while the church runs itself."

"Ah, you have this ring you spoke of?"

"Yes," and Dole took a little package wrapped in tissue paper from his vest pocket, unfolded it, and revealed a gold band ring with an opal set in it diagonally, and with but very little mounting.

The minister took the ring in his fingers, looked at it closely, folded it up, dropped it into his own pocket, and said:

"I will take charge of this for the present"

"The deuce you say!" muttered Dole. "What's that for?"

"By virtue of my interest in this case, and I would advise you to say no more about it. What you have told me will be kept in the same confidence in which you told it."

"Who in time are you, anyhow?"

"A detective, sent up here to investigate the strange death of Elliott Sanderson."

Dole leaned back in his chair as if paralyzed.

CHAPTER II.

Eavesdropping.

Sandy Scudder lived in a stone cottage near the shore, and half a mile from Dole's hotel, living alone and doing all his own work.

He was a fisherman by occupation, and sometimes let out boats, having a couple of extra ones, and so managed to earn a pretty good living.

He was cross and crabbed, and no one ever entered his house, for if they went there Sandy kept them standing outside while they talked business with him, and when he was out the place was kept as tightly closed as a prison.

This was the man who knew more about the death of the stranger than he would care to tell, so Dole and the detective from New York, who had decided them all by his ministerial appearance, determined see the old man at once.

"You'll find him a tough customer to deal with, Wright," said Dole, "and like as not he'll want to kn you down if you say anything to him about it."

"I think I can manage, tough as he is," said the tective quietly. "Would you like to go along?"

"Would I? Well, I did expect to do this job al but I'll go with you just to see you tackle Sandy. tangle-headed old fool! I'd like to see him jugged."

"I'm afraid you've got a grudge against the old fi erman, my dear sir," said Dan Wright in the tones had formerly used.

"So I have. He won't sell me fish, but takes 'em to market, and then they come back here and I ha pay double for 'em. Then he buys all his liquo New York and don't patronize my place, and if he lot of men working for him he supplies rum cheap keeps 'em away from here."

"Sort of a skinflint, eh?"

"That's it—a greedy, grasping old miser. Bet what you like that watch and chain of the stran goes into pawn-shop in New York before the week's The idea of his lying about not looking over the bo

Night had now fallen, and the detective, who had sidered it no more than right to take Dole into his fidence after what had happened, was about sta out to learn more of the old fisherman.

He knew that Dole, although self-important to gree, would hold his tongue, and that he might a useful ally in the matter on hand.

The two men set off together along the road le to Sandy's house, and had nearly reached it, w gleam of light was observed for an instant as tho door had been opened.

Such was indeed the case, and for a brief space saw the dark outlines of a man's form standing i open doorway.

He disappeared within, and the door was closed all was dark again, Dole saying in a whisper:

"The old guy has a visitor, and it must be som he wanted to see or he never would have let him in."

"Did you make out who it was?"

"No, not with his back toward me and that coat him."

"We must hear what is said. Is there a back wa

"Follow me," muttered Dole.

They entered the little yard in front of the where there were a few flower-beds, and passed a to one side where the light, playing on the red cu of a window, showed them that the room beyond occupied.

The windows were low, and Wright's waist came with the bottom of the sash, so that there would trouble in looking in if that became necessary.

The lower part of the sash was thrown up, the being warm, and the curtains hung nearly to the being kept from fluttering aside by something under the window, probably a chair.

One rapid glance down between the curtains, wh deftly pushed inward, revealed this much to th tective.

"Now, what d'yer want, Tom Norris?" he hea

surly old fisherman ask, and then two men came into the room.

Parting the curtains just in the slightest degree—certainly not more than the eighth of an inch—he saw Sandy and a young man with curly brown hair and a short brown chin beard and mustache standing near the big open fire-place, in front of which stood an old, very heavy, carved chair.

"Sit down, Sandy," said the young man, who had laid aside his hat and cloak, "and answer a few questions."

The old man sat down and growled out like a surly dog:

"What yer hangin' round town for? Why don't ye go to the city? Isn't the old man in trouble enough without yer making it wuss?"

"You picked up that body, didn't you, Sandy? Was there anything found on it?"

"That might say he wur murdered? No, there weren't but I say he wur for all that."

"Hush! If he was murdered you had as much to do with it as any one!" hissed the other.

"Well, I don't go hidin' aroun'. I stays about wher folk can see me."

"But you found nothing?"

"No!" came in surly tones.

"Not a ring—an opal set in a gold band with—"

"He wore no rings, or they'd be there now. Do ye think I'd go robbin' the ring off a dead un's hand?"

"This ring was not on his hand, Sandy, but in it, and was clutched so tightly that—"

"A ring in the corpse's hand?" growled Sandy, half getting up.

"Yes—it came off someone's hand when—"

The watchful detective, through the narrow gap in the curtains, saw Sandy suddenly spring from his chair and start for the door, but the younger man held the door shut with one hand, while with the other he prevented the old man's advance.

"Sit down, Sandy, sit down. Where are you going?"

"To ask th' old man if it was his ring that slipped off his finger when he pushed the stranger into deep water."

"No, no, he must not know you know it. The ring must be found."

"Ay, so it must," muttered Sandy. "I felt suthin' clutched in his hand, but I guessed it moight be a stone or suthin' like."

'And you did not take it out?"

"No, his fingers clutched it like a vise and I couldn't move 'em."

"If it is buried with him it is safe, and no one'll know—"

"And ye'll put the old man's life in risk. I donno what he had agin the stranger, but it must ha' been suthin'. I'll get the ring, if I have to take it from the dead man's hand."

Sandy started toward the door again, but the other stopped him, saying fiercely:

"Are you mad? Don't you know that nothing can be done now? Let the body alone. The right hand rests naturally across the breast, and if the ring is in it, there it will remain."

"Then you saw the corpse?"

"Yes, to-day, but no one saw me."

"Was the ring in the hand?"

"I don't know. If that was not taken there were other things that were, Sandy."

"What's them?"

"His watch and charm. If you have them, I'd advise you to get rid of them."

"Didn't I tell 'ee I wouldn't rob the dead?" growled the fisherman.

"So you said," sneered young Norris; "but I don't believe you for all that. You were bound to make something out of the fellow as well as some others."

"Ye're a liar!" snarled Sandy, "and if it was you that killed the stranger, 'stead o' th' old man, I'd make you swing for't."

"You daren't say a word. You had as much desire for his death as any one; remember that."

Sandy growled out something, and the detective, anxious to hear and see more, drew the curtains further aside and looked in.

It was an unlucky move, for Sandy saw his face and uttered a fierce yell.

He made a mad dash for the door, overturning young Norris, and in a moment was outside.

"This way!" hissed Dole, dragging the detective after him.

They leaped the low picket fence and dashed across a field and into a thicket, presently reaching the shore, which they skirted rapidly until they came to the road.

"That was an unfortunate thing to do," muttered Dole, when they found they were safe from pursuit.

"Yes, but the old man did not recognize me, and he may think he only imagined it when he finds no one."

"What do you think of the case now?"

"That the Norrises are mixed up in it, and that the opal ring will furnish the clew."

"Do you think the old man did it?"

"Old Norris? I'd rather not say what I think about it now."

"The young fellow is evidently shielding him, isn't he?"

Instead of answering this question, the detective put another.

"Did you ever see this opal ring on the hand of Tom Norris?"

"Not that I remember."

They now returned to the hotel, where their absence had not been remarked, and after sitting in the reading-room for an hour or so and listening to the conversation of the loungers, the detective went off to bed.

The next morning he paid an early visit to Sandy Scudder's cottage, but found it locked up and the old man gone, all of his boats having been taken away with him.

"That old fool does know something," thought Wright, "and he has taken the advice of young Norris and gone away. He will come back some day, though, and I must keep a lookout for him."

The opal ring was still in the detective's possession, and he now examined it closely in order to see if there were any marks upon it by which its owner might be determined.

He had not thought to do so before, in the excitement and bustle of the case, but the revelations of the preceding night had given him an idea and he now determined to act upon it.

Taking the ring from the paper in which Dole had wrapped it, he submitted it to the closest scrutiny, being

not content to use his eyes alone, but bringing a powerful magnifying glass to his aid.

Without this he could detect nothing except what appeared to be a scratch or so on the inside, and Dole told him when he began his inspection that he had already examined the ring for tell-tale marks, but had found none.

Wright now brought the glass to bear upon the supposed scratches, and under a strong light they resolved themselves into a definite form.

"These scratches, as we thought them," declared Wright, "are the marks of an engraving tool. The work is very neatly done indeed."

"What can you make out?" asked Dole, very much impressed with the detective's cleverness, and ready to declare him to be the first man he had met that was as smart as himself.

"There is the letter 'N' very neatly engraved. The work is the best I have ever seen."

"Is that all?"

"Yes. Of course that 'N' stands for 'Norris,' but as there is no other letter, the ring may belong to either of the gentlemen of that name whom we have seen."

"Well, at any rate, this is an important discovery."

"It is, and it adds weight to the evident desire of young Norris to get the ring in his possession."

No other marks or inscriptions could be found upon the ring, inside or out, and the detective put it carefully away, for the present, with what he had discovered.

The funeral of the stranger was to be held that day at noon, and as Wright had now discarded his ministerial dress, and appeared as a commercial traveler for a house in New York, a clergyman was sent for from the next town to read the burial service.

On the eleven o'clock train from New York, however, was a lady, who drove straight to Dole's and inquired for the proprietor.

"You have here the body of a gentleman who was found drowned three days ago?" she asked at once, upon being shown to the hotel keeper.

"Yes, madam. The funeral is to take place to-day, as no one has claimed the body."

"I wish to see it."

"Madame, this request"—

"The dead man is my husband."

Dole was very much astonished, and sent at once for Wright, who was somewhere about the place.

The officer entered the room where the remains lay just as the lady approached the coffin, accompanied by Dole.

The detective turned up the gas, and the lady exclaimed at once:

"It is he! Why did he come to this town, where he knew he had so many enemies?"

"Madame," said Wright, stepping up, "I am a detective employed to work up this case. Will you tell me, in strict confidence, remember, what enemies your husband had?"

She looked at the question for an instant, and then answered:

"Old Mr. Norris and his son Tom. They were his bitter enemies, though he would not believe it when I told him."

"Were there any others?"

"Yes, there was a wretched old miser of a fisherman, one of the most contemptible men I ever saw, and who lives in this place."

"Sandy Scudder?"

"That is the man, and it is one of these men who has murdered my husband."

"The verdict was one of accidental drowning."

"I do not care what these fools may say!" she exclaimed, bitterly. "I know he was murdered, and I demand that the guilty man be found."

"Madame," said Wright, quietly, "I can assure you that he will be!"

CHAPTER III.

The Valet.

On the day when the funeral of the stranger took place the local newspaper of Corr's Corners contained the following notice:

"WANTED—An attendant and valet for an invalid. Apply to Mr. Norris, The Cedars, Corr's Corners."

"The very thing!" mused Detective Wright. "I could not have a better chance."

The funeral of Elliott Sanderson had been very fully attended, for curiosity was still rife in the town concerning the man and his antecedents.

Neither Mr. Norris nor his son were present, and, in fact, no one seemed to know that the latter was in town, and, of course, Wright and Dole kept their own counsel, and old Sandy was still absent, and his stone cottage locked and barred against all intruders.

By the advice of the detective the dead man's wife had not made herself known, and, in fact, had not appeared, as her presence might alarm the assassins, should they hear of it, and with so many gossips about they would be almost sure to do so.

After the funeral the coffin was left in the hotel awaiting the disposition of friends in New York, it was said, but Dole had arranged to have it shipped by a late train that night, Mrs. Sanderson having telegraphed to her relatives to receive it on its arrival.

This much having been accomplished, the detective questioned the lady as to the antecedents of herself and husband.

"In the first place," she said, "my husband is the son of this miserable ruffian, Sandy Scudder, his name of Sanderson being an assumed one."

Here was a revelation to begin with, but the detective said nothing.

"My husband," continued the lady, "was good and noble; his father was a sordid old wretch who thought of nothing but money.

"He was constantly making demands upon Elliott, claiming to be poor, when I know he was very rich, having inherited, or rather taken, all of his wife's property when she died, besides making money in many illicit ways, his alleged occupation of fisherman covering up his real character of smuggler.

"My husband had had little to do with him for some time, having quarreled with the old wretch on account of his repeated demands and his miserable lying, sordid character, and upon his last visit here Sandy had threatened him vaguely, how much I do not know, as Elliott never would tell me.

"Now in regard to the Norris family, and you may judge if I am right in denominating them my husband's enemies.

"I met Tom Norris in New York a few years ago, and he pretended to love me and even propose to me, but I rejected him.

"He gambled, he drank and had other vices which I need not mention, all of which were well enough known to make his reputation a bad one, and yet, in spite of all this, he was admitted into good society.

"He swore that he would have revenge upon me for refusing him, and he made insinuating references as to my character before Elliott and other gentlemen, which Elliott, not then my husband, resented by knocking the scoundrel down.

"There was a challenge to a duel, but Elliott refused to meet such a villain, and Tom Norris was expelled from a number of clubs to which he had belonged, and refused admission to all good houses.

"Elliott and I were married, and Tom Norris floated around here and there, trying to injure my husband's business whenever he could, and buying up all claims against him and prosecuting them vigorously."

"Excuse me a moment," said the detective, "but was your husband interested in machinery or in steam-engines?"

"He was an extensive fitter of steamboats and had much to do with securing the best improvements in engines."

"Had patented some of these?"

"Yes."

"And was looking for capital with which to push them?"

"He had no need of that, as there were plenty of men always ready to back him up."

"Then he did not come down here to get old Norris to invest money?"

"No, indeed. Norris had offered to do so more than once, but I advised my husband to have no dealings with him."

"There's one lie to the account of old Norris," mused the detective. "Now do you know what actually brought him down here?"

"To buy up a claim which Norris held, and which had some years to run, and at a heavy rate of interest. Elliott wished to discount it at once, and have an end to the matter."

"Was that all?"

"I believe so."

"Did he come here of his own will, or was he sent for?"

"I do not know; he merely told me he was going down and I advised him against it."

"Why should old Norris be his enemy?"

"On Tom's account."

"He knew your husband?"

"Very well; they met many times before we were married."

"There's the second lie for Norris. He swore that he did not know your husband."

"He did, but after our marriage they never met, as Norris lived here all the time then, and when Elliott came down here to see Sandy he never went anywhere else."

"Would Sandy be a gainer by your husband's death?"

"No, for all his property was willed to me."

"Would Sandy have any motive for killing him then?"

"Only his hate and his contemptible disposition, and his desire to see me left helpless. He always swore that I influenced his son against him, but it was his own baseness that did that."

"I think I have no more to ask you," said the detective, quietly, "except—yes, stop a moment. Did your husband wear an opal ring?"

"Never."

"Have you ever seen this?" and the detective produced the ring found in the dead man's hand.

The lady turned pale for an instant and then said, quickly:

"I have seen that ring somewhere. The setting is peculiar, and I—"

She paused, evidently engrossed in thought, and the detective waited in patience for her answer.

"Yes," she said, presently, "I have seen this before, and on the hand of young Norris."

"Then it is his?"

"Yes—and yet," and she appeared to be in some doubt, "I think that the old man sometimes wore it."

"Ah, then that throws some doubt upon its ownership. Might there not be two such rings and each of these men own one?"

"There might, but I cannot say as to that."

"This ring was found in your husband's right hand, tightly grasped, when the body was brought here."

"Then these men are the criminals."

"I am satisfied that one is, but I do not know which. Tom Norris was in Sandy's cottage last night seeking for it."

"In Sandy's cottage? He has been suspected of being concerned in some of the old rogue's questionable transactions."

"It was Sandy who found the body, and, as we believe, robbed it. If he could have opened the right hand he would no doubt have taken this ring, and then there would have been no clew for me to work upon."

"Murder will out!" cried the wife of the dead man in impressive tones, "and by means of this ring the crooks will be discovered and brought to justice!"

Early that evening an applicant for the position of attendant and valet appeared at The Cedars, and was shown up to Mr. Norris' room by the housekeeper.

The old man sat propped up in an easy-chair, and was evidently very weak and in want of attention such as only a man could give him.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"John Snow."

"Any references?"

"Yes, sir, from my last employer, Mr. Hamilton, of New York."

"Why did you leave?"

"He went to Europe the first of the week, sir."

"What were you doing down in this out-of-the way place?"

"Came to get a rest, sir. Saw your advertisement to-night and wasn't averse to being employed. Don't like to be idle, sir."

"Can you hold your tongue and not gossip with the other servants?" demanded old Norris sharply.

"Excuse me, sir, I do not consider myself a servant. I am a companion, an *attache*, and never mix with the servants. I require a room to myself and a separate table."

"H'm, you'll suit," muttered old Norris with a grin. "I want a discreet person, and you appear to be discretion itself."

"Anything that comes to my knowledge, no matter how, never goes any further, sir."

"Good. Let me see your papers."

John Snow handed over a number of letters, standing respectfully while the other glanced at them, and presently the invalid said:

"They are all right. Can you enter my service at once? I want a man to-night."

"Yes, sir, I am always prepared."

"Very well. You can have a room to yourself, dine alone, and have all your wishes respected, and in return I wish attention, silence and discretion. I will give you one hundred and twenty dollars a month, with your board."

"That is perfectly satisfactory."

John Snow entered upon his duties at once, and they were by no means light.

Old Norris was not especially unwell, but he was nervous and excitable, needed his cushions changed a dozen times in half an hour, took odd fancies for all sorts of strange things, started at sudden noises, first wanted the room dark, and then could not get light enough, was hot and cold in a breath, and changed his mind quicker than the wind.

"He's had some shock," muttered Snow to himself, "and it has unnerved him. He was not like this yesterday. I wonder where Tom is?"

For three or four days the attendant had a good deal to do, but by the first of the week following the inquest and funeral Mr. Norris grew quieter, and did not require as much attention as formerly.

"I am liable to these shocks at any time," said the old man, "and you must be ready to attend me at an instant's notice, though I do not require your attention at present."

During these days nothing had been heard of Tom Norris, nor had his name been mentioned and John Snow being discretion itself, of course made no allusion to him.

"I wonder how long I will have to wait?" thought the detective, as he sought his own room, having little to do on this day, just a week from the finding of Eliott Sanderson's body in the bay.

"He has not once said anything suspicious either in his sleep or out of it, though I knew that his uneasy state was caused by the same state of his conscience. One word might tell me much, but he has not said it."

The next morning, however, on coming down to see if his employer wanted anything, the detective heard a strange voice, and advancing cautiously, saw that old Norris was not alone.

He was sitting by a table in the room leading from his bedroom, and was reading a letter, while in front of him was an odd assortment of various articles, a knife, a book, a tobacco pouch, a glass of water, a square tin box and a pipe, all lying carelessly on the large round-topped table before which he sat.

He had risen and dressed himself without assistance, probably at the instance of the man who stood before him with his hands thrust in his pockets, evidently waiting for him to speak.

All this the detective saw as he stood well back from the open door in the bedroom, holding a towel, hastily snatched from the wash-stand, in his hand, his presence having evidently not been discovered by either of the two men as yet.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the man standing, and the detective felt a thrill go through him as he recognized the voice as that of Tom Norris, so well disguised that he had failed to recognize him.

"It will do," said the old man, as he folded the letter and opened the tin box. "I do not intend to use it, but I want it to insure my own safety."

"Nobody accuses you of having killed Sanderson?"

"Not yet."

"I would not have given it to you if I had not wanted the money so bad. That cursed Sandy bled me terribly."

"What for?"

"To keep still. He said he had the ring."

"What ring?"

"The opal ring, to be sure. It was pulled off my hand when I pushed Sanderson from the rocks. Your letter promising to settle with him brought him here, I found him on a lonely part of the coast and hurled him into the eddy, but he clinched with me, there was a struggle, and my ring came off in his hand, and was found there when he was picked up."

"Your ring!" cried the old man. "It was as much mine. It's a good thing I have this confession if Sandy or you should combine against me."

"If I should?"

"Yes, you. I decoyed the man here, I lied to shield you, I kept you hid, but for all that, if you should want money, you would not hesitate to denounce me. This thing has nearly killed me as it is, but the man is dead, and now why don't you go away? You said you would not harm him, but that you only wanted to extort money from him."

"I wished to kill him, and I did kill him, and I am glad of it."

At that moment old Norris glanced up and saw his valet in the room beyond.

"My God! he has heard all!" he cried.

The detective stepped forward.

"Tom Norris, I arrest you for the willful murder of Elliott Sanderson," he cried. "This is your ring, I believe?"

The opal glittered in the morning light as the detective held the ring up before his gaze.

"Then that lying scoundrel has betrayed me after all!" he hissed.

He attempted to escape, but the detective hurled him to the floor, sprang upon him, and had him handcuffed in an instant.

The sudden shock killed the old man, and when the detective arose he found him with his head on the table, dead.

The confession was secured and Tom Norris expiated his crime in the electric chair.

Old Sandy never appeared again in the town alive, being drowned in a storm while returning in his boat, his body being found floating in the bay.

Thus a crime was avenged, and the guilty party brought to justice by means of an *Opal Ring*.

THE DETECTIVE'S MISTAKE

A SERIAL STORY.

BY GILBERT MACKEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I don't believe you. I shall hand you over to the police.

"On what charge? You would only be laughed at. I'm willing to help you if you are discreet. Just try to raise the hue and cry against me, and you'll soon see who's got the most friends in this neighborhood, you or I."

Instinctively Andy perceived that the woman was right.

Let her be what she might, he had nothing to gain by making a scene in the street

In fact, a curious crowd of idlers had collected in front of the saloon, and were regarding them suspiciously even now.

The neighborhood he well knew to be one of the worst in New York.

In the hands of that crowd his life would not be worth a rush if this woman chose to rouse them against him, as he had little doubt of her power to do so.

"Do you mean to tell me that you know nothing of that assault on me in the dark in the upper hall of this house the night I followed you in here?"

"Nothing, young man, as God is my judge. I was perfectly sincere in my promise to you. I heard a noise in the passage when I went in to open the door, but when I came out to see what it meant, there was no one to be seen."

"A man sprang upon me, and but for a friend would have killed me. I was robbed of the iron ring."

"I'm sure I can't account for it," replied the woman, uneasily. "This is a perfectly respectable house. Come into Shampansky's and tell me all about it, and I'll get you the paper I spoke of at once. I tell you but the truth when I say it will surely save your friend."

"No, thank you. I think I see myself following you into that den again!"

"But, my dear sir, this is a public saloon. Anyone can see us from the street. Surely there can be no harm in that. I don't ask you to go upstairs. Why do you doubt me? I am telling you the simple truth. I want to be your friend—and to serve you if I can; but, alas! who will believe a woman like myself? I cannot blame you, sir, for your suspicions, but you wrong me, nevertheless."

Tears gathered in the woman's eyes. She put up her handkerchief and wiped them hastily away.

If ever in this world there existed a picture of injured innocence, it was she.

The tears settled it.

Surely there was some strange mystery about his person.

Inasmuch as it concerned Al Constantine it must be solved at any cost.

Moreover there could be no risk in entering so public a place as this Shampansky's saloon and early in the evening too.

Going upstairs in the dark late at night was quite a different thing.

Andy resolved to comply with the woman's request.

He looked around for his companion.

He had crossed the street and could now be seen leaning against an area railing upon the opposite side of the way negligently twirling his bamboo cane.

"Well what do you say?" demanded the woman. "I can't and won't stand here in the public street talking before this crowd. Come into Shampansky's and I'll tell you all I know in this murder case and place that paper in your hands as well."

"Go on, but have a care what you do. If you try any more games on me you may find yourself in trouble sooner than you suspect."

The woman laughed and hurried up the steps.

Andy followed her as she led the way into the saloon.

It was an ordinary place enough like a hundred others of its class.

A bar occupied what had once been the front parlor of the house in the days of its use as a dwelling by persons of fashion; in the rear room there were tables and chairs.

Several rough-looking men evidently of the Polish-Hebrew persuasion sat drinking at the tables in the front room their wants being supplied by a red-faced individual in his shirt-sleeves and with a half-smoked cigar in his mouth who stood behind the bar.

The woman with a familiar nod to the man behind the bar led the way to the back room, which was deserted and motioned Andy to be seated at a table which stood beside an open window looking out upon the back yard.

"I'll go up to my room and get the paper," she said, in a low tone; "wait here until I come back, when I shall have something to tell you about this Gaylord murder which will surprise you more than you think for."

"All right. Be as quick as you can."

Passing out of a side door, the woman hastily left the room.

Several moments passed.

She did not return.

Meanwhile the men in the front of the saloon continued to converse with animated gestures in an unknown tongue.

They paid no more attention to Andy than though he had not been there.

"This place seems straight enough," thought he boy. "There can be nothing dangerous in a lot of Polish Jews."

He leaned back in his chair, with back toward the open window, watching the singular way in which the drinkers emphasized their conversation by shrugs of the shoulders and rapid movements of the hands.

Not a suspicion of danger now occupied his mind.

Suddenly, and without an instant's warning, he felt his neck and shoulders grasped from behind.

A heavy hand was clapped over his mouth, and Andy Fenn, without the slightest opportunity to either struggle or cry out, was drawn through the open window as though he had been a child, and dragged down a short ladder and into the yard below.

CHAPTER XV.

Sim Scudder Finds Himself With a Second Mystery on His Hands.

When the lady orchestra struck up the "Watch on the Rhine" at the Thespian beer garden, and the crowd of Germans out on the Bowery for an evening stroll began to pour into its open doors, that was the time when Conrad Fugelmeyer, the corpulent proprietor, rubbed his hands with solid contentment, broke forth into radiant smiles and ordered for his own private consumption an extra sized schooner of beer.

"Dot's pizness," he said to the bartender, as he leaned over the brass covered pan pierced with many holes, upon which the freshly filled beer glasses were stood. "Dat's vat I like to see, blenty of nickels into mein—hello, Meester Scudder, fine evenings, I dunno."

"Good-evening, Fugelmeyer. Yes, it is a pleasant evening for a fact."

It was Sim Scudder, the detective.

Agreeably to his appointment with Andy Fenn, he had hurried to the Thespian as soon as his day's work was done.

But Sim Scudder was late.

The great clock over the bar of the beer-garden showed that it was already half-past eight.

In all probability Andy was already impatiently awaiting him within the garden.

He hurriedly entered the great inclosure and passed among the crowded tables, scanning every face.

The countenace of his young friend was not among them.

Andy Fenn was nowhere to be seen.

"Now, I wonder if he can have got tired of waiting and gone off in disgust," thought the detective. "Surely he would allow me a few moments' grace."

Again he passed through the entire length of the garden.

Certainly the boy was not there.

"I'll wait for him at the door," thought Scudder. "The braying of that infernal band is enough to drive one mad. Perhaps Andy has been delayed himself. I'll head him off as he comes into the garden; at least it will save a little time."

He passed out into the bar-room once more, and was about to take his stand at the outer door, when he heard his name pronounced.

"Meester Scudder, von moment, ef you blease."

It was mine host, Fugelmeyer, who spoke.

As did a large number of persons in New York city, he knew the detective well.

"Here's a letter for you," he said, coming forward. "A poy just pring him in and say gif him to Detective Scudder ven he comes."

"From Andy, I'll bet a dollar'," he thought. "Something has happened to prevent his coming. Now, I wonder what it can be?"

He hastily tore open the envelope, which was addressed to himself.

"Friend Sim—I leave the city to-night for the West. I can't meet you according to promise, and, what is more, it would do no good if I could. I have learned that since I saw you which has convinced me that Al Constantine is guilty of the murder after all. I shall take no further steps in the case. Can't say when I shall see you again. Yours,

"ANDREW FENN."

Sim Scuder stared at the paper in amazement. He could not believe his eyes.

That Andy might have learned much concerning this mysterious case during the last few hours was possible, but that he should go away for an indefinite time, without communicating with him personally, after the help he had just rendered him, was more than he was willing to believe.

Such action was wholly unlike the boy.

Moreover, to go West requires at least some slight degree of preparation with most men.

A few hours before Andy had, to his certain knowledge, no more intention of taking the advice of the renowned Horace Greeley that he had himself at the present moment.

"You say a boy brought this in, Fugelmeyer?"

"Yes—a poy. He just gif me de letter, and ax me to give it to Detective Scudder."

"Where is he now?"

"How should I know? Skipped off somevere. Haf a trink mit me, Meester Scudder. Anyting you like in de house."

"Thanks, Fugelmeyer; you must excuse me to-night. I have too much business on hand. Which way did the boy go?"

"Now I vish I might told you, Meester Scudder. I'd like mighty vell to oblige you, but I never looked at him at all."

Sim Scudder crammed the note hastily into his pocket and hurried from the saloon.

Never in his life had he been so perplexed.

Ponder as he would, he could think of no solution of the matter at all.

Until now he had not entertained a doubt of the genuineness of the letter itself, but as he passed up the Bowery in the direction of Canal street, which is, as every one knows, the next street beyond the Thespian Garden, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder whether Andy had actually written that note after all.

He was not familiar with the boy's writing. To the best of his recollection, he had never received a written communication from him in his life.

"Now I wonder," thought he, "if this can be another move on the part of these mysterious scoundrels, who have evidently had a hand in this case from the first.

Can they have become alarmed at the activity the boy was beginning to display in this case, and have spirited him away? By George! I begin to suspect so. I'd give ten dollars if I only had a line of Andy's writing to compare with this.

"Fool that I am!" he suddenly added, striking himself upon the forehead. "I have got just what I want in my vest pocket now—the note of hand given me by the boy for the trifle of money I loaned him the other day."

He thrust his hand into his pocket, and drawing forth a scrap of paper, held it up by the side of the letter he had just received in the light of a neighboring lamp.

The writing upon the note bore no resemblance whatever to that contained in the letter. The two signatures were totally unlike in every respect.

"Well, of all the cool proceedings I ever heard of, if this don't beat the deck!" exclaimed Sim Scudder, slowly drawing a long breath. "These scamps have just taken the chance in writing this precious document that I had none of the boy's writing with which to compare.

"This has a very nasty look. Something has certainly happened to Andy. That he has fallen into the hands of these scoundrels, who have been working in the dark in this whole matter, is absolutely certain.

"Merciful Heaven! they may have already murdered the boy! Who knows?"

Thrusting both pieces of paper back into his pocket, he turned and ran down the Bowery in the direction of the Thespian Garden at full speed.

"Sim Scudder, Sim Scudder!" he muttered to himself. "You think you are a detective, but it is rapidly dawning upon my mind you are little better than a fool. From the very first in this Gaylord matter you have been guilty of one series of terrible mistakes. If anything happens this brave boy, you shall never wear your professional shield again. Quick, now, save him if he still can be saved! You never should have allowed him to move about for one moment unwatched. This is your second terrible mistake. Correct it if you can!"

He rushed into the Thespian, and hastily inquired of the corpulent Fugelmeyer if he had seen a young man in his garden during the early part of the evening in any way resembling Andy, whom he described.

"Gott pless mein soul! How should I know?" answered the proprietor of the beer garden, shrugging his shoulders half way to his ears. "A tousand beoples cooms in and goes owt. Could I remember your frent, und he go in and owt a dozen dimes aready? Shiminney Chreesmas! Vy you ax me one question so foolish as dot?"

"Ask your waiters in the garden, Fugelmeyer, there's a good fellow. This is a case of life and death."

"All right, Meester Scudder. It ain't no use, but I'm a man vot is at all dimes ready to oblige a frent."

Notwithstanding the opinion of the worthy Mr. Fugelmeyer to the contrary, the inquiry proved far more useful than he had supposed.

One of the beer servers in the garden remembered Andy distinctly—he had suppliel him with a glass of beer.

From this man the detective learned that his friend had left the Thespian hurriedly, in company with a young and fashionably dressed man.

"A decoy!" muttered Sim Scudder, "one of those wretched young scoundrels that are ever willing for a trifle to lend themselves to any dirty job. This case is getting deeper. I must work, work, and may God grant that it is not yet too late to save this brave and daring boy!"

His first impulse was to notify the police and sent out a general alarm.

The more he thought of the case, however, the stronger his conviction became that such a course would be useless.

If it was the intention of those who had captured Andy to murder him at once, then beyond a doubt the boy was already dead.

If, on the other hand, he still lived, by a little care and shrewdness Sim Scudder felt sanguine that before morning he might succeed not only in finding his missing friend, but in laying his hands upon several of the gang of the mysterious persons whom he now felt were working—had been working from the first—to secure the conviction of Al Constantine for the murder of Edson Gaylord, and to throw dust in his—Sim Scudder's eyes.

But who were these mysterious workers in the dark, who until now had kept their movements so skillfully concealed?

That was a question to which the detective was utterly unable to make intelligent reply.

Never until roused by the adventures of Andy Fenn, during the storm of two nights before, had he felt the slightest doubt as to the guilt of Al Constantine.

Working on the case entirely with that one idea in view, he had allowed himself to overlook several important matters which might have served as clews.

Was it absolutely certain that the banjo string found grasped in the hand of the murdered man had absolutely come from the banjo of Al Constantine?

This he had been satisfied to assume in the affirmative from the fact that the string corresponded as to length.

Would not this be equally true of any other banjo string forcibly torn from any other banjo, and chancing to break off close to the key?

Most decidedly it would. In the present aspect of the case, Sim Scudder felt that he wanted better evidence than that.

He had accordingly taken from the particular banjo in question the bit of the silver-wound bass string which still remained adhering to the key, and carefully wrapping it up with the string itself, which he had previously cut into two pieces, had determined to submit all three pieces to a dealer in such articles that very night.

Another point was now clear to Sim Scudder's mind.

It was the fact that whoever the murderer, the motive could not have been robbery; for the rich display of jewelry upon Gaylord's person had remained untouched.

Either sudden anger or revenge must surely have been the motive for the crime; unfortunately for Al Constantine, his case fitted both.

"It all turns on the banjo string,' thought the detective, as he hurried up the Bowery toward police headquarters, with the intent of starting out two of his colleagues on the hunt for Andy Fenn.

"If Andy is right and his story of the midnight visitor to his room is no dream, as I have been hitherto inclined to believe—if this banjo string proves of different make from the bit which remained attached to

the key of Al Constantine's banjo, why then the murderer must have been some other person possessed of a banjo who took passage upon the ferry-boat during that very trip.

"Now the boat hands swear that the little party, of which I myself was one, were the only passengers upon that boat. I'll swear I didn't murder the bibulous Gaylord, whom if I don't greatly mistake, the world could well afford to lose. Andy Fenn and Hen Spencer never left my side, and as for Maurice Barrytown, he only stepped out on deck for a moment to look for Al, whom, strange to say, he did not encounter at all.

"Now, if Maurice could have in any way benefited by Gaylord's death I might with my nature, made by my profession suspicious of everybody and everything, be tempted to consider him in this case; but as it is—"

Suddenly Sim Scudder stopped short, both in his meditations and his walk.

"My God!" he murmured, "what horrible thought is this that intrudes itself at this moment into my brain?

"Maurice Barrytown did benefit by the death of Edson Gaylord to the tune of $50,000, for which sum, for the benefit of Gaylord's sister, now Barrytown's wife, the life of the murdered man had been insured!

"It is impossible! Simply impossible!" he muttered, as he hurriedly resumed his walk. "I have known Maurice Barrytown for years. Such a thought is incredible to the last degree!

"A man deliberately murder another that he may inherit through the sister of his victim?

"No, no, I can imagine no one but the most hardened criminal who could successfully undertake a crime like that."

Banishing the thought from his mind—and, indeed, it certainly was not worth a moment's consideration—Sim Scudder now hastened on to police headquarters, and dispatched two shrewd detectives to visit several noted criminal resorts in search of tidings of Andy Fenn.

For his own part he had determined to visit the Holly Tree Inn and have it out with old Dorris at once.

Whoever these mysterious plotters might be, that pious-minded individual was evidently in communication with them.

If nothing could be learned from Dorris himself, perhaps Miss Jennie could throw some light upon the case.

As he passed along down the Bowery on his way to Delancy street, to that worst of Christian hash-houses, the Holly Tree Inn, his eye chanced to fall upon the sign of a dealer in musical instruments, upon the second floor of an old building just below Houston street upon the left-hand side of the street.

"Perhaps I can make a point here," he said to himself, as he turned into the dimly-lighted entrance and ran briskly up the stairs.

"At all events, it will only take a moment, so I might as well run in and see."

He opened the door leading to the music-dealer's apartments, which had a noisy little bell attached to it, which jangled out discordant notes as the detective entered the shop.

"Vell, mein friendt, vot can I do for you?"

It was a tall, lank German who spoke, who wore an old-fashioned faded cassimere dressing-gown, and smoked a long-stemmed china pipe.

He was evidently the proprietor of the establishment, and the detective proceeded to business at once.

"Have you any banjo strings?" he asked, approaching the counter.

"Blenty. Vot kind of string you vant?"

"What kind? Is there more than one kind?"

"More dan von kind! Mein frendt, I tinks you don't play much dot banjo already yet. Do you vant de 'C' sthring, de 'E' sthring, or de bass sthring, I dunno?"

"I want the bass string—the one wound with the silver thread."

"Ah, yah! Now you dalk sense. How you haf him. Sheap or dear?"

"Is there more than one sort of bass string? My banjo is a good one, and I want the best."

"Dot's sensible; ven you got to be an old man like me, you learn dot de pest is always de sheapest in de end. You vant de imported French sthring. I haf him de pest and de sheapest wot you puy him in de whole city of Neyer York."

"On second thoughts, I think I will better to get the same kind of string I had on my banjo before," remarked Scudder, quietly, at the same time pulling a small package wrapped in tissue paper from his pocket and laying it upon the counter. "These are the broken pieces to go by, see if you can give me a bass string the exact duplicate of that."

The old musical instrument dealer opened the package in silence.

Three broken pieces of silver-wound bass banjo string stood revealed.

Putting a great pair of horn-rimmed spectacles upon his nose, which conveyed to his eyes the appearance of an exceedingly animated bull-frog, the German attentively examined the bits of string, the detective norrowly watching his countenance as he did so.

"Mein frendt," he said at length, removing the china pipe from between his lips and blowing out a volume of smoke, "ef I understand you not at first, already, I understand you still less now. Here two kinds of sthring I haf; von is of de American make, and de oder is French. Vich you vant? De sheapest or de pest?"

The heart of Sim Scudder gave a sudden bound.

If this was true, then there was hope of saving Al Constantine after all.

He exhibited, however, no change in his outward appearance at all.

"Which is which?" he asked quietly. "I guess I don't know much about banjo strings after all."

"I should say not. Dese two long pieces are de French, dis short piece is de American. I know him for von very good reason—I make him meinself."

"You made that short bit of string?"

"I did. I make de best banjo sthrings vat ish made in America; I also make de sthring for de zither, and likewise for de guitar. See! I vind dem dis vay, from right to left, over de catgut. De French dey do him different; dey vind de silver thread from left to right.

Sim Scudder examined the two pieces of string attentively.

Instantly he saw that the man was right.

By no possibility could the string found in the hand of Edson Gaylord have ever formed parts of the scrap taken from Al Constantine's banjo, attached to the bass key.

(To Be Continued)

CURRENT NEWS

A DANGEROUS FOE.

Perhaps the deadliest foe of the Australian sheep farmer is the eagle-hawk, and many and wonderful are the contrivances invented for his destruction or capture. A correspondent at Singleton says it is no uncommon thing for a farmer with a run of quite average extent to lose a hundred sheep in a season through the depredations of these carnivorous birds. "Their strength," he writes, "is so abnormal that it is practically impossible for the sheep on which one pounces to resist the attack, and their appetite for live mutton appears to be insatiable. They are occasionally caught by means of a trap attached to the carcass of a sheep.

ELECTRICAL HELP FOR THE GLAZIER.

It has remained for a new company to introduce a device which is bound to prove a great boon to glaziers and others engaged in handling glass windows of all kinds. The new device is in reality an electrically-operated putty router, which serves to remove putty from all styles of glass windows, rebabbets the sash and makes a clean cut, removing points at the same time in one operation. It is compact, portable, quickly adjustable, and can be attached to any lamp socket. The router is operated by a 1 12 horse-power universal motor, with a speed of 12,000 revolutions per minute, and is instantly controlled by a push-button switch. A grinder wheel can be placed on the arbor by removing the cutters, and serves to grind the latter.

ELEPHANTS FOR TIGER-HUNTING.

Not all elephants are qualified for tiger-hunting. Every animal used in the sport must be steady, obedient and fearless, for if a single elephant misbehaves or bolts when he confronts one of the huge cats, the deadly contagion of fear may spread broadcast, and runaways, broken palanquins, and loss of life may result. This is the way in which men select the animals to train for the hunt:—

As a preliminary step, they walk the elephants back and forth in a court where are ranged cages containing tigers and leopards, for the sporting rajahs generally maintain private menageries. When they have become accustomed to the smell of these animals, a tiger is chained to a post in an open space, with a leash carefully measured to mark the length of his leaps. The mahouts then force the pupil-elephant to approach as near the post as safety allows and to remain for some time within a few steps of the tiger.

Each day the tiger's chain is lengthened, and the prisoner, which is kept half-starved, charges fiercely at the elephant as it comes near. Those elephants which stand their ground without flinching are considered qualified for the hunt in the jungle, but those that have revealed the least timidity are degraded from the rank of hunter—the aristocracy of their kind—and are turned over to ignominious labor.

According to a zoologist of the Calcutta Museum, among every thousand elephants that undergo this training only about fifty will not bolt when brought face to face with the chained tiger; but nearly half of those that stand their ground bravely at first retreat before a more ferocious assault.

SAVED BY A HATCH COVER.

Among the crew of the Poigat, a ship that foundered off Malabon, in the Philippines, was a half-breed named Alejandro Lorenzo. In the moment of the ship's sinking he was agile enough, and lucky enough, to leap clear of the wreck and escape the deadly suction of the disappearing vessel. He was alive and uninjured, but he was many miles from shore and there was no help in sight.

After swimming an hour he found a hatch cover on which he rested. Then pushing the hatch cover ahead of him he started for San Nicolas. He was just reaching shallow water when the tide carried him out to sea again.

As night came on the wind increased and the waves tossed him and the hatch cover back and forth till he was almost exhausted, but toward midnight he found that he was being washed toward the Cavite shore. For several hours he drifted in, but just as his hope grew strong the tide and the wind swept him in spite of his struggles once more out to sea.

Something brushed against his leg. He thought that it was a shark and screamed in fear. "It did not touch me, or I should have gone mad," he said. The water was cold, the night was dark and the rain beat down on him. He heard a cry in the darkness and pushed his hatch cover in the direction whence the sound came. He found a Filipino boy, another survivor of the wreck, clinging to an oil box. They drifted together.

When daylight came they could see boats, but could not make themselves heard or seen. They were tortured by thirst, salt water got into their mouths, they drifted all day.

Night came again. Soon after dark they saw the lights of a breakwater and with new hope noticed that the lights grew larger and more distinct. They were being washed toward the shore. But the boy could not hold out. Taken with cramps, he lost his hold on the oil box and went down. The man was washed into the middle of the bay and drifted all night.

At dawn he was almost ready to give up, but the wind and waves headed him for the shore and he took heart. Then he saws boats and used his last strength in trying to reach them. The boatmen saw him, were able to get to him in time and picked him out of the water. There was not much of the man left and, shrieking for water, he collapsed in the bottom of the boat.

As he lay on a pallet, after he found himself able to

talk again, his rescuers spoke of his wonderful endurance. Tlejandro in reply said that, of course, he had done the best he could. He wanted to live, he said.

SECRET POLICE SPY ON ALL.

A vast spy system of more than 1,000 members and soon to have 2,000, was the description of the "Special Service Bureau of the Police Department," New York, given recently by a person familiar with some of the secrets of the new organization announced a few days ago.

The members are not expected to make arrests, it is understood, but will keep their identities hidden so no one may know whether the person next to him is a "secret service" man. Special Deputy Commissioner John M. Shaw is chief of the new bureau, which is understood to be modelled very closely after the American Protective League, which was dissolved by the Government at the end of hostilities as an organization which did not fit the ideals of American institutions under peace conditions.

At the head of the secret service, the exact character of which police officials make every effort to conceal, are big business men, bankers, brokers, lawyers and others who have the entry to New York's best clubs and social circles, and to each of whom is said to have been allotted a section of the city over which he is to act as captain.

The idea of dividing the city into zones for secret service was first adopted by the American Protective League, which differed from the present organization, however, in that it was perfectly frank about the character of its organization and permitted newspaper men to learn the names of its officers.

Under the zone captains the police volunteer "secret service" is said to be filled from all classes of workers —chauffeurs, laborers, hod carriers, waiters or anyone else who is deemed fitted for service.

It is also said there are branches for different trades, with a view to letting the police know what is going on in any shop or factory about which inquiries may be made. It is said several thousand reports on individuals already have been made.

It was explained that to many places in the city it is impossible for a detective to gain entrance without being "spotted," but under the present plan it is generally possible to have a "member" who has entrance to almost any place, whether it be a secret labor union meeting or a club.

The avowed purpose of the "secret service" is to fight Anarchy and Bolshevism, and it is said to have nothing to do with detection of crimes. It is said the activities of all branches of the Socialist Party and the extreme radical organizations and "parlor Bolsheviki" are included in the surveillance.

One complaint made against some members of the American Protective League was that they displayed their shields in personal controversies and by threatening antagonists with arrest or unfavorable reports used their position for oppression. The result was that the first badges were called in by the Government and a new means of identification established which eliminated the words "secret service."

200,000 REINDEER NOW ROAM THE PLAINS OF ALASKA.

Unlimited possibilities and opportunities are to be found in the Arctic regions, was the message given the students of the summer school at the University of Washington by Viljahlmur Stefansson, the explorer, who has made the closest study of conditions, and whose observations have been the most practical yet given the world on this subject.

Stefansson decried the action of others in picturing life within the Arctic Circle as one fraught with hardships and sufferings. He compared the prairies of the Arctic with those of the Dakotas, vast plains where one could find the grasses and flora that are supposed to thrive only in the temperate climes. He spoke at length on the reindeer industry in Alaska, with its possibilities of furnishing fresh meat for the world, and of the immense deposits of high grade coal, both of which are of inestimable value as future sources of supply.

"Thirty years ago a small herd of reindeer were introduced into Alaska as a means of relief for the natives, and from this small beginning there has grown an industry which will prove one of the greatest sources of wealth in Alaska," he said. "At present the herds in Alaska number well over 200,000 animals, and would have far exceeded this number if proper methods had been used by the natives in increasing their herds. The native will sacrifice his best cows, valuable for propagation, for a beautiful skin, or to obtain a fat animal. The securing of reindeer cows from the Laplanders, who were brought to Alaska to teach the care and herding of the deer to the natives by the whites, will result in scientific herding, and an immense yearly increase may be expected from now on.

"The United States Government in their original contracts to supply the natives of Alaska, made the sale or transfer of any female animal to a white person prohibitory, but failed to indicate a like clause in their contracts with the Laplanders, with the consequence that the whites, who saw the commercial advantages in the raising of reindeer, seized upon the opportunity to secure their cows from the Laps. Now a company which has been formed in Nome for this purpose has four immense herds, which are doubling in size practically every two years. Inside of the next ten years, if careful breeding is followed, there will be at least 5,000,000 of the animals grazing upon the tundras of Alaska, which is about the limit that can be properly taken care of there. There are 100,000 square miles in Alaska suitable for the grazing of reindeer, but the northern part of Canada has a million square miles, and no doubt steps will be taken to introduce reindeer in this area.

"The value of this industry may be comprehended by the fact," he declared, "that at present there are about 5,000 carcases shipped out of Alaska each year, which bring on an average $30 each, with the price of the meat about 11 cents a pound higher than beef. When Alaska will have the 5,000,000 deer that her plains can take care of there will be a yearly shipment of 1,250,000 carcasses, which will bring $60,000,000. The profit to be made from this industry may be shown by the fact that the reindeer are self-supporting, finding their own food, no barns or grounds need be purchased and one herder can care for 2,000 of the animals, at a cost of 50 to 75 cents each. The carcasses are landed in Seattle at the present time at a total cost of between $7 and $8 a head, leaving a profit of about $22 for each animal."

FEAR SNAKE OMEN.

There came very near being a scandal in the Wendall Church congregation of Pratt, Kan., and as it is there are many quiet rumors floating about concerning certain members of the congregation.

It came about this way:

The minister was about to begin his sermon when he saw a huge blacksnake gliding in through the front door. He jumped on a chair and members of the congregation, sighting the reptile, followed suit.

Late comers killed the snake. But the members of the congregation take it that the snake was a sign of ill omen and that some one in the congregation at the time has not been following closely the paths of righteousness and that the snake, which first brought about the fall of man, was sent as a warning to reform and repent.

TO MAKE DEATH AID LIFE.

Dr. Serge Voronoff, of Paris, who claims he can postpone old age by grafting interstial glands, points out in an article in the Journal that the internal secretion of such glands as the thyroid and supra-renal continue alive three hours after the death of the body, and therefore, advocates that bodies of young and healthy persons killed in accidents be rushed to special hospitals, where patients are suffering from curable maladies. He says the grafting glands could be grouped and put in cold storage, where they can be kept indefinitely.

"Unfortunately," writes Dr. Voronoff, prejudices and law now prevent this. Our secular customs require that our perishable bodies be consigned to the earth, where they slowly and uselessly are consumed.

A BIRD'S GREAT POWER.

One might suppose that a much larger body would be needed to generate as much energy as a bird needs, and that a framework of elephantine size, for example, would be productive of far greater speed in flight and endurance in cold, storms, or continuous exertion. That this is not only not the case, but is quite unnecessary and even impracticable, Nature has demonstrated during untold ages for we have now at hand so many of her former experiments in various types of flying monsters for comparison that we can safely be assured that the modern bird, endowed with flight, has been developed along the most effective and economical lines to take its part in the world-complex of living organisms, says a writer in Bird Lore.

Just how this has been brought about the study of comparative anatomy tells us, for, without it, some of the bird's structure would be an insoluble puzzle. In this exercise, therefore, let us search for some of the reasons why a bird is able to produce and keep up so great an amount of motor-power, or energy, observing that this energy is most strikingly expressed in the form of motion and heat in the case of a bird. When one calls to mind a hummingbird, poising on wings which vibrate so rapidly that they cannot be clearly seen, it is certain that there must be a remarkably perfect mechanism for transmitting the energy which sustains such rapid and long-continued motion. Great wheels chained to roaring waterfalls and belted to smaller wheels, which in turn move giant gangway saws or huge millstones, scarcely produce an amount of power which will cause more rapid motion.

Again, if one considers a bird like the penguin, which nests in Antarctic regions, incubating its single egg and rearing its nestling young successfully with no other aid than a particularly warm blanket of fat, which keeps in the heat of its body so that it does not succumb to the cold and freeze, it is clear that the energy necessary to keep up and conserve this body heat must be practically never-failing.

THE BUFFALO OF THE EAST.

The buffalo of the East, while a domestic animal, is used in transport service equally with the familiar ox, from which he is easily distinguishable by his low set, down curving horns and muzzle carried almost straight forward.

People who are obliged to travel by buffalo cart are deserving of sympathy, for the buffalo is the slowest of all draught beasts. It is his great strength that gives him the advantage over the ox. The load that a single yoke of buffaloes will pull is astonishing. In India they are always given the kind of load which is assigned to drayhorses here, ordinary horse work, except passenger traffic, being performed by the humped oxen, known elsewhere as zebus.

India, indeed, is the native home of the buffalo, and it still exists there as a wild animal. Very wild indeed it is, too, and an old bull is very apt to attack unprovoked, contrary to the usual custom of almost all wild animals. Even its tame descendants retain plenty of spirit. It is said that when in a herd they do not fear the tiger, and a recognized method of getting "stripes" to bolt when he has taken to cover is to drive in a herd of buffaloes to rout him out, which they will do to a certainty if they get on his scent.

Even tame buffaloes can make themselves very unpleasant to people they do not know, and they are not at all safe for a Westerner to approach in India, but, and here appears the most attractive side of their character, they display toward their owners a faithfulness, one usually associates rather with dogs than with cattle.

The true Indian buffalo is to a great extent an aquatic animal and when off duty likes nothing so much as to lie up to its ears in water, but like the duck, it can if necessary resign itself to existence without a bath. That an animal so nearly naked of protecting hair as it is should thrive in so cold a climate as that of Eastern Europe is a remarkable fact of acclimatization.

Its presence in Italy is less surprising, but even there its introduction seems to be merely of medieval date. Scientifically, the tame buffalo is of interest as having, like the ass, varied so little from the wild type. Pied buffaloes are as rare as pied donkeys, though white and fawn colored varieties occur as well as the natural black. Like the ass also, the buffalo is a despised animal, yet in local utility both beasts may surpass their more aristocratic relatives the horse and the ox, while in intelligence and "force of character" they are certainly far superior.

AMERICA'S FIRST NOVELIST.

The first American novelist to take up writing of fiction as a profession was Charles Brockden Brown, a native of Philadelphia, who died 10 years ago. His first work, 'Aleuyn,'' was published in 1797. His novels abounded in scientific and psychological speculations, and enjoyed sufficient popularity to enable him to make a living by his literary labors. His works have long since been forgotten. American novels had been written before Brown took up his pen, but novel-writing as a profession was unknown on this side of the Atlantic until the Philadelphian set the example of practical achievement in that branch of literary labor.

BLAMES MONKEYS FOR WEAR OF SHOES.

According to Dr. F. Wood Jones, professor of anatomy in the University of London, the reason why children wear out the outer edges of their shoes first is to be found in their descent from an arboreal type of man that much resembled the monkey. His argument is typical of those who cling to the theory of the descent of man from the lower animals. As found in his book, "Arboreal Man," it may be summarized about as follows

The arms of the apes and monkeys are longer than their legs at one stage in its development the human embryo's arms are longer than its legs. The feet of anthropoid apes are turned inward; a baby's feet are turned inward. When a monkey walks its weight rests upon the outer sides of its feet; so does that of a baby. Therefore it is the inherited arboreal foot-poise that makes the little shoes wear out on their outer side before they are worn on their inner side.

TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENTS IN WELLS.

C. E. Van Orstrand, in a paper presented before the Geological Society of Washington, has given an interesting summary of the results of temperature measurements in a number of deep wells located in Texas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The apparatus which he devised for making these measurements is accurate within 0.2 or 0.3 deg. Fahr. for depths of about 4,000 feet, while for greater depths the error may rise to 0.5 deg. in some cases. The depth temperature curves are not straight lines, but curves with a marked convexity towards the axis of depth. Thus in the case of the remarkably Goff well, in West Virginia, which was drilled to 7,386 feet, the rate of temperature increase varies continuously from 1 deg. Fahr. in 97.5 feet at the surface to 1 deg. Fahr. in 46.5 feet over the interval 6,000 to 7,000 feet. In the Texas and Oklahoma oil fields temperatures at a given depth differ widely from those found in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The temperature of the oil in two wells near Mannington, W. Va., is 83.2 deg. Fahr. at a depth of about 2,900 feet. In the Ranger field, Texas, the temperature of the oil at 340 feet is estimated, from measurements at higher levels, to be about 135 deg. The average rate of temperature increase at the surface for thirteen wells in Texas and Oklahoma is about 1 deg. Fahr. in 51.5 feet, as compared with 1 deg. in 91.5 feet for twelve wells in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

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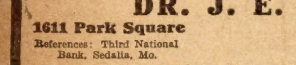

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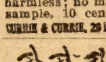

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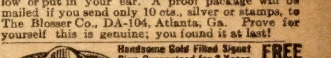

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